

OFF THE MAP:  
SPATIALIZING ACCESS TO MEMORY IN BEITUNIA, PALESTINE

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## **Abstract**

Through an application of critical geography via mental sketch mapping techniques, this thesis seeks to understand how the Palestinian concept of *sumud* - steadfastness - is realized in the built environment, as well as how this concept interfaces with the more nuanced cultural values attributed to the same built space. By using the municipality of Beitunia, Palestine as a case study, an oral history is visualized through this technique, and its spatial outcomes are contrasted with the top-down heritage perspective of more traditional, monument-centered cultural resource surveys. This process uncovers the spaces throughout the municipality's Old Town of shared and divergent values, as well as trends in how different types of residents value these spaces differently, according to age, gender, and relation to the municipality. Through this approach, this thesis argues for how heritage conservation professionals can effectively use social science tools as a driver for the social justice aims of urban planning. I conclude with policy recommendations which articulate how to promote an ongoing engagement between residents and heritage assets as forms of political resistance.

## Acknowledgements

This project was very much a team effort. It would not have been possible without the help of many collaborators, especially the Riwaq Center for Architectural Conservation in Al Bireh, Palestine. With the assistance of Khaldun Bshara and Shatha Safi, in particular, I was able to work with an intern, Salem Shamia, during fieldwork in Beitunia. Salem provided the necessary translating between languages and cultures for this project and it was a pleasure to conduct fieldwork with him. My internship this past summer laid the foundation for this research, and my initial site visits to Beitunia with Ahmed Alaqra are what first sparked my curiosity in this municipality, in particular.

I'd also like to thank my advisors, Hiba Bou Akar and Will Raynolds, and my reader, Carolina Castellanos, for their guidance during this challenging year.

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# Chapter 1 - Introduction

## *Aims and Scope*

This thesis explores the discrepancy between what is formally valorized, assessed, or otherwise recognized and what is actually valued in a conflicted context, as well as how the donor community can contribute to this gap in knowledge production through emphases on tourism or traditional historical sites. In response to this natural divergence in what is valued, this thesis applies a method of engagement which draws from existing literature on the notion of mental sketch mapping. Using the Palestinian municipality of Beitunia as an applied case study, this research contends with the controversial and broader questions of how heritage sites are assessed and regenerated, and for whom. By interrogating these questions of heritage in a contested geography, it hopes to bring new knowledge into the growing overlap between the fields of urban planning and historic preservation, while provoking further work regarding assessment during the early stages, or in anticipation of, regenerative projects.

The object of study, or research problem, is how to better identify where to guide heritage assessment and regeneration in a conflicted context. The setting is the contested landscape of Beitunia, a municipality just west of the de facto administrative capital of the State of Palestine, where recent events both locally and globally have characterized the daily lives of its residents. Given the limitations on local agency, as a continuing legacy of colonization of the Middle East broadly and Palestine specifically, ongoing attempts at valorizing spaces in the Occupied Palestinian Territories can often lack positive, impactful, and long-term outcomes for residents. By contrast to several other Palestinian villages which have been either completely bulldozed (such as Yalo) or appropriated (such as Lifta), Beitunia's historic architecture, which predates the British Mandate, takes on additional social and cultural meanings. These meanings most notably include the celebrated Palestinian concept of *sumud* - Arabic for steadfastness -

wherein the continuation of physically occupying space which is imposed upon by outside forces becomes a virtue.

Amid the global backdrop of increasing Islamophobia and refugeeism, the urgency of the aims of conservation planning guided by this concept of sumud in Palestine cannot be overstated. Meanwhile, the local apparatuses of both preservation and planning can struggle to find actionable practices because of this geopolitical instability. For both fields to advance, better means of addressing local aspirations must be tested in order to find paths toward alternative futures which aren't characterized by contemporary architectures of distrust and fear. Within this Palestinian context, the definition of preservation itself becomes an inherent act of resistance, and becomes something which the concept of sumud can embody.

Our own biases as planners and preservationists color our experience of what values or spaces a municipality should valorize. While these biases stem from experience, we know intuitively how different versions of the same events, places and heritage values exist between government agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and local populations. In my own experience, projects identified in Palestine have been satisfactory, but could be more inclusive and potentially have more beneficial outcomes with other forms of intervention. The aim of this research is to better understand these discrepancies between the apparent wider community opinion and their overlap with the official narrative, as those divergences won't allow for heritage planning, however well-intentioned, to remain effective long-term.

### *Research Questions*

In order to address these issues, the primary or overarching research question is, "How can cognitive or 'mental' mapping techniques be applied for a better understanding of built heritage and participatory planning in Beitunia, Palestine?" Secondary to this, I'm asking, "How can heritage reconstructions be better guided by these techniques while in the initial phases of project implementation?" and "How can the municipality incorporate interventions which are

guided by similar processes to these mapping techniques?" These questions are meant as iterative and exploratory, in order to understand the various steps of heritage assessment based on the social realities and potentials discovered in the field. They're also meant as evaluative, as an examination of the efficacy and practicality of an applied technique.

## *Methodology*

While an application of a specific method is the object of research, this thesis incorporates a variety of methods in order to best ascertain relevant information for evaluating this method. This includes secondary sources such as historical photos, archives, databases, and literature regarding heritage designation and regeneration in historic Palestine. Beyond scholarly resources, local and international news surrounding the designation of relevant UNESCO sites provide additional insight for this question of assessment and its geopolitical ramifications. This thesis is also situated within the context of previous research, including work which has already recognized how the concept of sumud is a celebrated community value. Sumud is tied to an active and dynamic present, and its embodiment can extend well beyond the historic fabric of an Old Town as originally assessed.

Primary sources I've employed include more "passive" techniques such as field observations in Beitunia, as well as the more active, social survey which involves both a mapping activity with more closed-ended questions and accompanying standardized, open-ended interviews which have been approved by Columbia's IRB. The open-ended interviews meant to create a space of trust and allow for the interviewees to feel comfortable sharing their stories, memories, and honest opinions regarding the use and significance of their social spaces.<sup>1</sup> The mapping exercise uses the method of photo elicitation with an aerial photo to build on the more typical space-related surveys conducted during site analysis, and elicit new

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<sup>1</sup> Rubin, Allen and Earl R. Babbie. *Research Methods for Social Work* (7th ed.). (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Cengage, 2011), 216.



information regarding sites of value. The process then triangulates this spatial data along with their corresponding semi-structured interviews, and quantitative demographic questions. This ethnographic technique is then compared against the more formal archaeological and spatial data sets acquired from the Riwaq Center for Architectural Conservation. In this effort, the cultural value or significance is “ground-truthed” by attaching field recordings directly to geographic place, which involved replicating the exact sketched drawings themselves onto the superimposed aerial photo. The end result intends to combine and contrast the traditional approaches of environmental review or cultural resource surveys - their techniques of collecting more formal architectural, archaeological, and GIS data - and that of this more on-the-ground, field interview and mapping exercise.

### *Interviews*

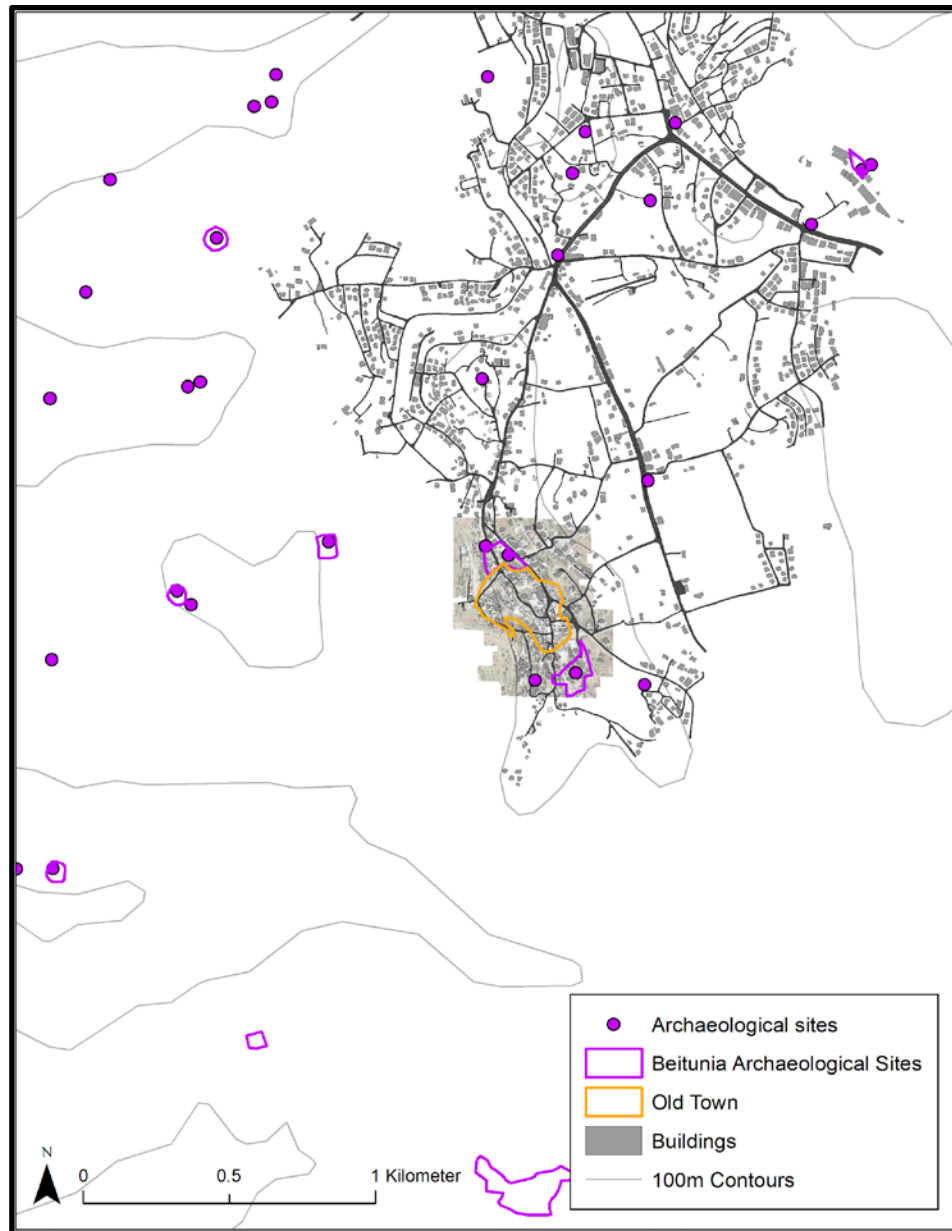
For the implementation of the project itself in Palestine, I led with the technique of photo elicitation using an aerial map of Beitunia (Figure 1), which allowed for the plan perspective to act as a springboard for conversations involving the everyday use of their municipality. I administered the exercise along with the help of Salem Shamia, an intern at the Riwaq Center. Salem allowed for me to conduct the interviews and mapping exercise by instilling local trust and translating to and from Arabic. The interviews were approved by the Columbia IRB prior to trip departure, and entirely voluntary.



*Figure 1. Aerial photo of Beitunia's Old Town, comprised of a patchwork of aerial photos used by Riwaq during site surveying in 2017.*

The aim of this mapping exercise was to test its own applicability, in the hopes of potentially expanding the available toolbox regarding assessment of significance of urban spaces within Beitunia. In turn, this would help to guide the process of project identification in a

more inclusive way. Beyond non-identifying demographic questions, this process was experiential, including short walks with residents through part of their town. We also asked residents to mark places on a map they consider home, where they work, spend time with friends, travel through, and either frequent or never go, in order to better assess their significance. These questions served as a basis for conversations which utilized more open-ended questions, and are discussed in Chapter 4. The basemap used for the field survey was georeferenced using ArcMap, and the written responses of areas highlighted were transcribed as newly created shapefiles in ArcCatalog, for cross-referencing between demographic variables. These new, survey-based shapefiles were combined with the aforementioned archaeological and building shapefile data, which was acquired from Riwaq and the Municipality. This allowed for a comparison between the archaeological features in the dataset which matched up with what was heard during some of the interviews. The registry of traditional cultural resources is combined and visualized on the following map (Figure 2).



*Figure 2. Archaeological sites in and around Beitunia. Also pictured is the urban extent of the newer part of Beitunia, and 100-meter contour lines.*

This map includes building shapefiles acquired by Riwaq, to give a sense of the urban extent of the Old Town of Beitunia in relation to its post-1967 development to the north. The 100-meter contour lines represent its elevation in relation to surrounding land, which is also visualized in Figure 3.



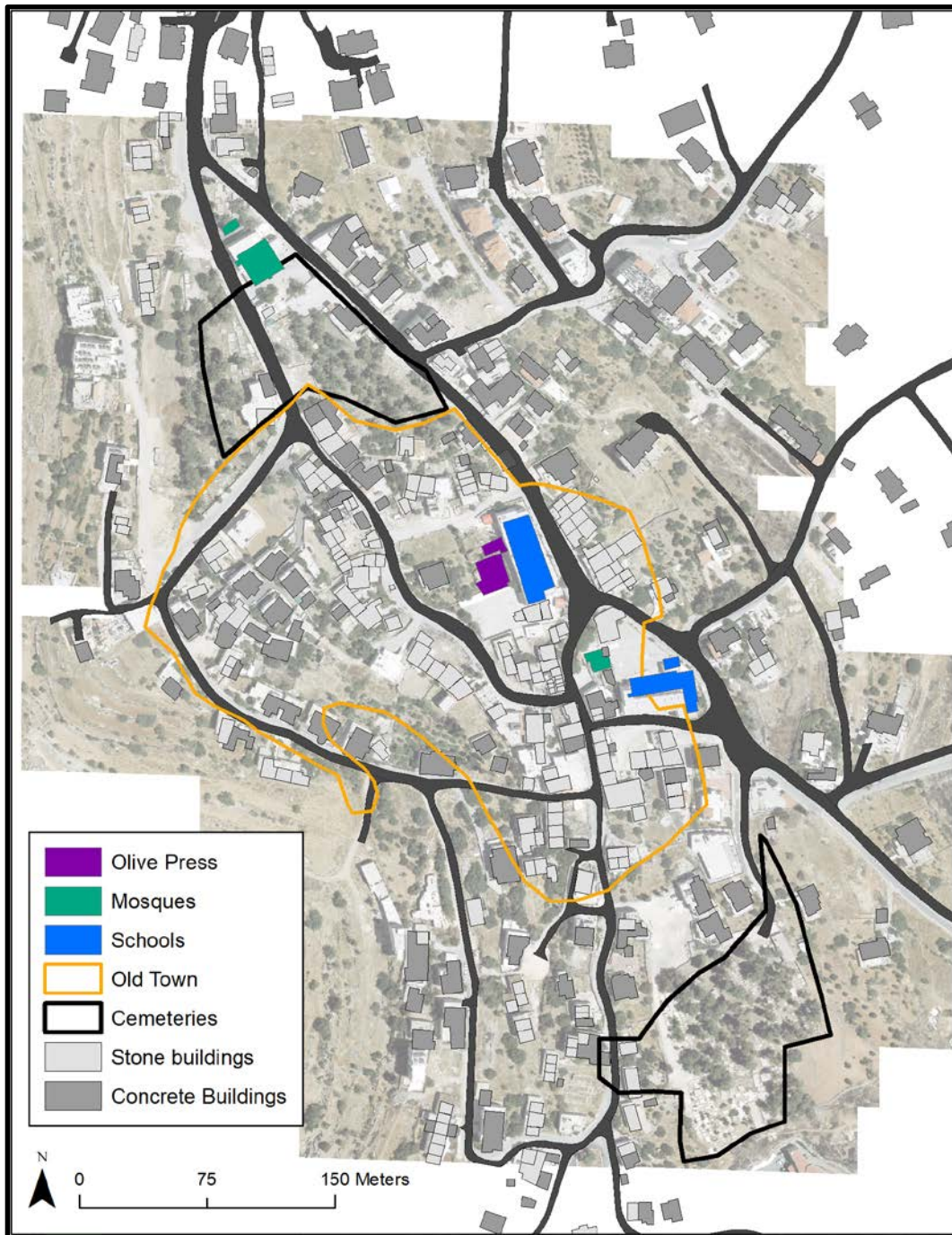
*Figure 3. Elevation of Beitunia in relation to the surrounding landscape within the West Bank, looking south from the edge of the Old Town. January 2018.*

Based on the context of previous research, specific sites were kept in mind (but remained unstated) during the interviews. These included previously valorized spaces of the extant walls and millstones of the old olive press of the municipality, the nearby historic architecture in the 'hosh' configuration,<sup>2</sup> the three pairs of mosques, cemeteries, and schools are also notable locations previously identified by Riwaq, and labeled in Figure 4.

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<sup>2</sup> This refers to a historically archetypal collection of one- or two-story stone dwellings with a small central courtyard.





*Figure 4. Beitunia Old Town with the previously identified significant buildings.*

## *Field Research*

*Summer 2017:* I first learned about these significant places in Beitunia during my summer internship with the Riwaq Center in July 2017. While collecting building information for a more

accurate and current site plan of Beitunia, part of Riwaq's ongoing 50 Villages project,<sup>3</sup> I learned about how their Phase One work focused on the municipality's olive press, but also seeks to understand the broader sense of urban fabric within the city. Their focus on these fifty historic centers in the OPTs is due to their discovery, from the historic register, of how nearly half of the remaining historic architecture in Palestine is concentrated within or near these fifty historic centers.



*Figure 5. Apparent space of social gathering within the Old Town. July 2017.*

In spite of their focus on municipalities including Beitunia, what struck me the most about the municipality and our process was how much we, the outside 'experts,' seemed to still be missing regarding how the city was actually used by its residents. While social spaces, such as the one in Figure 5, didn't appear on the map of either the Municipality's planning or Riwaq's

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.riwaq.org/50-historic-centers>.

conservation efforts, the spaces seemed as though they could actually be more significant for the local residents.

In contrast to these natural gathering spaces, the municipality's office had a model (Figure 6) of how they planned to renovate the roundabout in the public plaza, called Al-Fallujah square, near one of the schools and mosques, just east of the olive press. This also left me wondering to what extent a sense of collective identity the municipality was truly expressing through its public art. I also remained curious as to how the production of these formal or informal gathering places is governed, and by what mechanisms.



*Figure 6. Model of the new public square. July 2017.*

*Winter 2018:* After travelling back through Israel, which was only feasible by virtue of my American passport and Jewish identity, fieldwork commenced with the enlistment of help from a current intern at the Riwaq Center for Architectural Conservation. The intern, Salem, and I conducted research in Beitunia between January 7-14th, 2018. I spent the prior week gaining additional background information from the Riwaq Centre. This included unstructured interviews



with their Director, Khaldun Bshara, as well as their Senior Planner, Shatha Safi, regarding their techniques of engagement and the status of their work in Beitunia.

In the interview with Khaldun, we discussed their approach to preventive conservation, and how their method wants to valorize the apparent significance of what is already there but perhaps isn't as noticeable. In the spirit of collaboration, and in an effort to work against the pitfalls of monument- or building-centric architectural practice, their village-based projects now each have a team of two to four architects and planners working together, rather than one 'master' architect as in the past. He also explained how there is a "single-building focus if the client is the municipality,"<sup>4</sup> and how, in that case, the municipality would need to prove at least half of the current site is under their ownership for intervention. The final client is the partner, owner, stakeholder, or as they call them, the 'user' of the heritage restoration.

### *Exercise and Interview Structure*

The areas on the aerial basemap which respondents were asked to highlight were:

- What you consider home
- Where you work
- Where you spend time with friends
- Your place of worship
- Parts of the city that you frequent
- Parts of the city that you never go
- Your typical routes

While structured by the following interview questions, the overall process of engagement in Beitunia was meant to be open-ended, allowing for the interviewees to feel comfortable sharing their stories, memories, and honest opinions regarding the use and significance of their social spaces. Due to the accommodating nature of the residents, we were sometimes invited inside of the homes of residents and offered tea or coffee while we conducted the interview. The

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Khaldun Bshara, December 28, 2017.

initial survey questions informed us of demographic trends and created a cultural asset map for Beitunia. They included:

- Age range: 18-24/25-34/35-44/45-54/55+
- Gender: F/M
- What is your connection to Beitunia?
- How long have you lived in Beitunia?
- If you don't live there now, when did you? Why did you move?

Secondary questions were also asked, which aimed to give insights into the intangible heritage assets absent from these maps while providing the interviewees with a platform from which they could share these relevant stories of Beitunia's past and built space. These were described as:

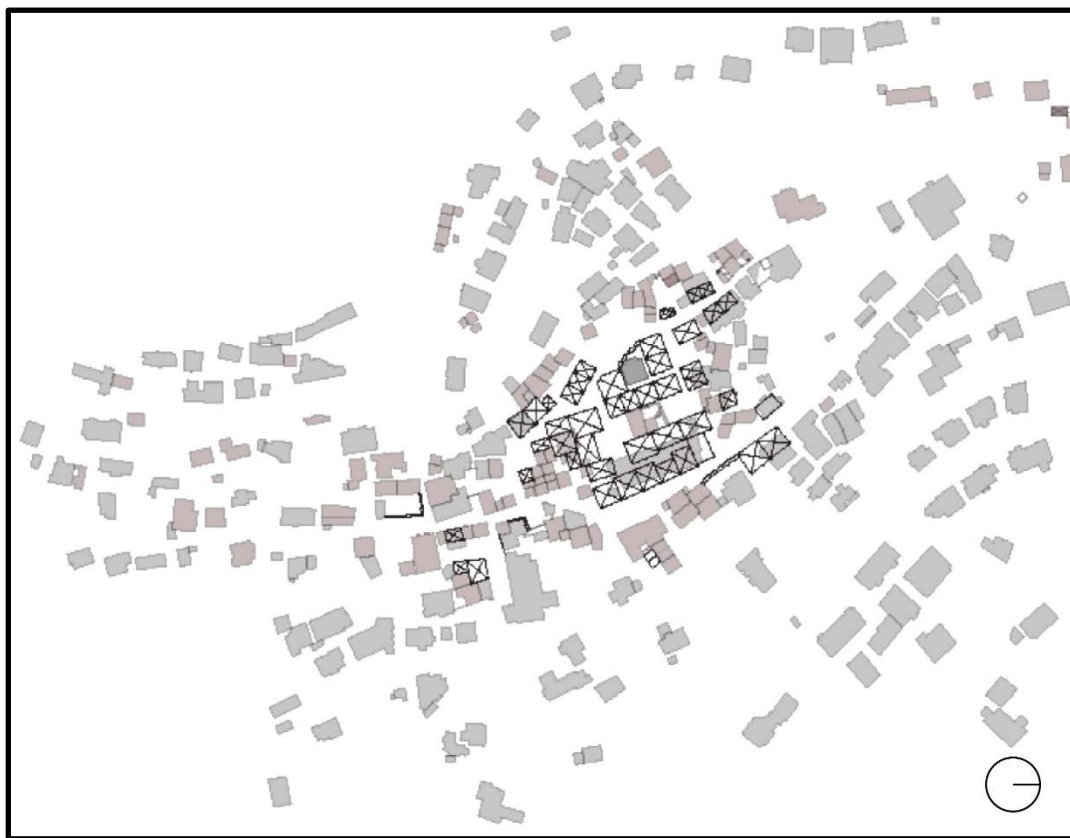
- What are some of your favorite places in Beitunia?
- What places or buildings are you proud of?
- These areas that you frequent, do you consider them home?
- Where does this idea of home end for you?
- Are there things about these areas that you frequent that you don't like?
  - If so, what are they?

### *Field Observations*

The fieldwork in Beitunia was intended to analyze how the village is used by residents, both from interviewing and observing places of congregation and travel. We also utilized photography and acquired experiential knowledge of Beitunia by walking its entire extent and re-visiting different parts of it. This allowed us to note the location of different development patterns and uses. Along with the mapping exercise, we wanted to locate potential places of social significance, cultural significance (sumud), and to what extent they appear to deviate from the "authorized heritage discourse" (Smith 2006) regarding the Old Town of Beitunia. This method allowed us to assess the relationship between the heritage discourse and on-the-ground reality or lived experience in Beitunia.

### *Archival Research*

To better understand the significance of Beitunia's Old Town and its relation to the concept of *sumud*, I also utilize archival sources for information regarding its history and changing landscape. These included both primary sources such as the Chicago Beitunian Newsletter, a publication circulated among their main diaspora in the U.S., as well as the Riwaq Center's archive regarding the municipality's past. Their past work also included efforts to identify dimensions of the demolished components of the historic fabric of the Old Town through oral histories. These locations were based on additional oral history conducted by one of their architects, Ahmed Alaqla, and convey how much of the former urban density was uprooted either to make way for the widened roads or the modern school, as seen in Figure 7:



*Figure 7. Locations of demolished buildings superimposed over the existing historic core of Beitunia's Old Town. Stone buildings are symbolized with red, concrete in grey. Used with permission from Ahmed Alaqla.*

### *Assumptions and Limitations*

Beyond presumed honesty and dissolution of ulterior motives for guiding where on the Old Town aerial photo participants highlighted, the research design implies an emphasis on these formerly designated heritage assets. In doing so, the research is guided by a central assumption of the importance of historic architecture to residents of Beitunia. Additionally, the design assumes inclusion criteria for the sample of the Beitunian population as appropriate, and therefore assures that the participants have each experienced the same or similar phenomenon regarding the study area. The sample size of the population is also deemed enough from which to derive trends and conclusions.

As the primary researcher doesn't speak Arabic, the language barrier was the primary concern for research limitations, and addressed by having a Palestinian translator in the field at all times. On-the-ground participation in the anonymous survey was the determining factor of the research sample, and thereby doesn't fully consider those who might have driven by the researchers, or might not have been available in the municipality during the dates and times of fieldwork. Another implicit bias of our approach involved how we only interviewed within the immediate vicinity of the Old Town of Beitunia, and consequently focused on this location for spatializing heritage values. A lack of readily available, unbiased sources regarding heritage management in Beitunia was difficult to ascertain, which formed the basis for the unstructured interviews with both Riwaq Center staff and the municipality's acting Director of the Engineering Department. While the approach focuses on the influence of outside donors and how they can better work with Palestinians, this emphasis comes at the expense of a deeper analysis of the domestic politics within the Palestinian National Authority.

## Chapter 2 - Method Development

“If I wish to substitute a new building for an old one, I must demolish before I construct.”

- Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, 1896.

### *I. Palestinian Potential for “Peoples-Based” Conservation Planning*

In the Middle East broadly and Palestine specifically, over a century of colonial conflict and concurrent social constructions of the “other” have affected both how the colonizer and the colonized view themselves (Said 1979). Indeed, the failed United Nations’ “Partition Plan” of 1947 remains realized through the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestine and stems from the blatant lack of local participation in creating a democratic consensus. Nationalist narratives, including those optimistic of pan-nationalism regarding a new League of Nations after the second World War, sustained misunderstandings of “Palestinism” and Arab Nationalism (Dowty 2005, p. 61). In approaching heritage regeneration projects within this conflicted geography, the bias of outside investment will inherently impact how the outcomes of projects are represented, and this history of centuries of resistance toward foreign cultural or economic penetrations creates well-founded skepticism. Through utilization of more planning model, values-based approaches to preservation, however, conservation efforts have hoped to avoid contributing towards these ongoing legacies of exclusion and limited engagement, despite their inevitable guidance by international funding. In spite of these efforts, Holston (2008) argues for how there’s an inherent colonizing structure of urban studies which is embodied in the socially constructed figure of the “expert,” while Smith (2006) describes these top-down biases as an undesired but essential aspect of an “authorized heritage discourse.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore, development of a combined values- and rights-based approach to preservation is essential for the fields to advance.

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<sup>5</sup> These discourses remain multivariate and in competition with one another, however, and are not necessarily tied to specific stakeholders or nationalisms.

Alternatives to engagement with subaltern<sup>6</sup> populations can help widen the field of discussion with regards to heritage value, rather than setting parameters according to the prevailing authority. This potential for an emancipatory public engagement via heritage is argued for by Dean Sully (2007), whose work on Maori houses outside of New Zealand shows the potential for a “peoples-based” conservation. This is a conservation process more attuned to this legacy of colonialism and the range of people necessary for inclusion to even begin to overcome the related obstacles. The process must inevitably be a complex negotiation with participants who each bring their own assortments of values to the debate (Avrami et al 2000, de la Torre 2002). Sully also acknowledges how “the use of an expert language by powerful elite produces ‘facts’ that deflect consideration of other values that are not constructed within [a scientific] framework of understanding” (p. 33), since the legacies of colonization manifest in both research emphasis and subsequent knowledge production.

Participation remains a strong argument for the validity of urban intervention, and thereby its even apparent inclusion in projects has become a priority. But it cannot be merely representational, even tokenizing. As Ian Hodder explains, “people may achieve political freedom, the right of expression, and the vote (political emancipation), without achieving resolution of deeper forms of alienation and inequality (human emancipation).”<sup>7</sup> We can attempt to discern and measure degrees of participation (Arnstein 1969), but ultimately must consider the social complexity of the sheer range and depth of experience from which we, as the outside experts, are trying to ascertain guidance. Additionally, we must consider the potential and validity of shared authorship. After 1948, for example, memorial books helped construct

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<sup>6</sup> Originally Antonio Gramsci’s concept of subalternity, See: Morton, Stephen. “The Subaltern: Genealogy of a Concept”, in *Gayatri Spivak: Ethics, Subalternity and the Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. Malden, MA: Polity, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Hodder, Ian. “Cultural Heritage Rights: From Ownership and Descent to Justice and Well-being.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 83, no. 4 (2010), 865.

nationalist identity while recounting the details of destroyed Palestinian villages, but individual memories can often conflict with building archetypes.<sup>8</sup>

## *II. Architecture of Contested Sites in Israel/Palestine*

In this landscape marked by extrajudicial seizures of land, detentions, and killings, how can heritage regeneration as facilitated by foreign investment truly provide a broader benefit to society? The competing narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are constantly performed in the built environment, and speak to the broader issues inherent of increasing refugeeism and demand for urban space. Geopolitics, as manifest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, dictates the means of access to reliable infrastructure in Palestinian built environments, thereby severely limiting the funding and possible expansion of projects in municipalities such as Beitunia.

By extension of these postcolonial contexts, the conservation-related interventions will also often retain a materiality-based focus. Conservation itself developed during the 20th century as a professional discipline from its roots in traditional maintenance, repair, and restoration (Pye 2001). If the field is to remain professionally relevant and ethical in the 21st century, it needs to further grapple with the contemporary remnants and implications of these professional roots, not unlike the social sciences including anthropology, sociology, and psychology.

Especially through the international apparatus of UNESCO, the geopolitics of heritage designation have become much more pronounced than their local impacts. International attention and ever-rising political controversy already surrounds the question of protecting buildings or landscapes deemed cultural property in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. As De Cesari (2010) explains, multicultural heritage policies, as promoted by UNESCO, not only risk affirming and solidifying cultural differences, but also the asymmetries between them. The direct

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<sup>8</sup> Slyomovics, Susan "Discourses on the Pre-1948 Palestinian Village: The Case of Ein Hod/Ein Houd," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* (1993), 29.

impacts of recent geopolitical moves to Israel/Palestine politics, including the U.S. decision in October 2017 to withdraw from UNESCO, and December 2017 announcement of the intention to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, remain uncertain. While the recent U.S. political decisions stem from newly uninhibited right-wing exceptionalism, the UNESCO organization itself remains premised, for the sake of both translation and legitimacy, on the notion of an “old” preservation as a means of philanthropic interest. Recently contrasted by an alternative “new” preservation of economic impacts and financial incentives (Koziol 2008), the problem with both of these approaches is ultimately the continuation of top-down authority over what is considered and promoted as heritage. The additional formal valorization, in the form of designation of these sites, actually contributes to the universalization of their heritage, which can effectively further the legacy of colonization. In other words, if the aim of outside investment is to promote equality or social justice, it needs to benefit from an understanding of how “identity politics...frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences” (Crenshaw 1991, 1242). As Lynn Meskell describes this universalizing phenomenon, “natural ecologies have supplanted peopled histories and contemporary social urgencies” (Meskell 2010, 842).

### *International Heritage Landscape*

Given its unique context, different levels of valorization and agency have marked the heritage landscape in the OPTs. With such limited local agency, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has resorted to leveraging the World Heritage Committee as a means of gaining legitimacy. However, both the current U.S. and Israeli governments have long considered UNESCO as singling out Israel and applying unfair scrutiny. The Old City of Jerusalem became only the second UNESCO World Heritage site listed on the World Heritage in Danger in 1982, and remains the oldest extant site “in danger” to this day.<sup>9</sup> The Old City’s

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<sup>9</sup> “List of World Heritage in Danger by Year.” World Heritage List Statistics.  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/stat/#s7>



designation as such was proposed by Jordan, which shows how appealing the newly created, global platform on “World Heritage” was to Arab states in the 1970s, as they also comprised six of the first thirteen signatories.<sup>10</sup> With the hopes of greater representation or voice, heritage became a newly internationalized framework which could be utilized in lieu of gaining leverage against Israel or other Cold War powers otherwise.

Since Palestine’s acceptance as a signatory to the World Heritage Convention (WHC) in 2011, the United States has legally been unable to pay its dues to UNESCO, greatly diminishing its budget. In the year after its admission to the committee as a States Party, its initial site of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (2012) was inscribed, but immediately placed on the World Heritage in Danger List, provoking questions of the political aims of such heritage. The south Jerusalem, Land of Olives and Vines Cultural Landscape of Battir (2014), and perhaps most controversial Hebron/Al Khalil Old Town (2017) followed suit as Palestinian sites of World Heritage, to the outrage of Israel’s government. Showing the PNA’s initiative to use these sites as political leverage towards a future state unoccupied by Israel, a total of thirteen other sites currently remain on the tentative list of World Heritage properties for the State Party of Palestine.<sup>11</sup> While the Fatah-controlled government of the PNA aims to use these as leverage, all of these sites remain as mere inventories of cultural heritage assets, with no management plans.

The additional attention which these sites receive due to their unique confrontation with Israeli settler colonialism enables the very political bias which the WHC claims to avoid. As previously discussed, even if these designations attempt to work towards wholistically conserving sites, they can inherently also promote negative asymmetries between cultures

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<sup>10</sup> These were Egypt (2), Iraq (3), Sudan (5), Algeria (6), Tunisia (12), and Jordan (13).  
<http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/ps>.

through their nation-states' authorized discourses.<sup>12</sup> Regardless of these negative consequences, the WHC retains its power and relevance by virtue of its sheer number of signatories. Currently signed by 193 States Parties, the WHC remains the sole heritage-related international agreement with the most signatories.

Its usage in Palestine, while uniquely impacting organizational funding due to the U.S. withdrawal, is not necessarily uncommon. Rather, it represents the increasingly political role of heritage conservation. This eager rush to inscribe,<sup>13</sup> rather than wholistically conserve sites has come to the attention of the WHC before, when "Canada and Estonia complained of the loss of focus on the Convention through premature inscriptions (Meskell 2013), and when the United States claimed that geopolitical considerations, not scientific ones, dominated decision making due to the lack of heritage expertise, whether archaeology or ecology, within the delegations themselves."<sup>14</sup> Frustration over this clear, Euro-centric universalization and politicization of inscription has even manifested in targeted cultural heritage destruction, such as by ISIS in Palmyra, Syria.

### *Alternative Tourism*

As a means toward legitimacy of narratives, as well as a response to this dominant or conventional heritage landscape, both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have implemented "alternative" heritage tourism. Within the West bank, Israeli settlements contain growing numbers of museums central to their development, which celebrate past visions of Ancient Samaria and Judea as claims to the land.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile in the Golan Heights' Qatzrin or within

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<sup>12</sup> Both De Cesari (2010) and Smith (2006) illustrate the issues regarding these WH sites and their nation-building aspirations.

<sup>13</sup> Sometimes referred to as heritage "fever," and largely related to the short-term economic stimulus of touristic value. See: Lee, Joomi. "Riad fever: Heritage tourism, urban renewal and the medina property boom in old cities of Morocco." *E-Review of Tourism Research* 6, no. 4 (2008): 66-78.

<sup>14</sup> Meskell, Lynn. "UNESCO's World Heritage Convention at 40." *Current Anthropology* 54, no. 4 (2013): 487.

<sup>15</sup> Katriel, Tamar. *Performing the Past: A study of Israeli settlement museums*. Routledge, 2013.

Ariel, the largest Israeli settlement, “military” tourism insinuates a normalization and moral justification of the occupation of Palestine, among other Israeli foreign policies. Several police departments in the U.S. facilitate trips to learn “counterterror” techniques in both Israel and within certain settlements, which has domestically sparked outrage and solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.<sup>16</sup> In either example, maps - as a form of border maintenance - remain a crucial component of the promotion of these claims to land (Figure 8).



*Figure 8. The Assistant Mayor of the Israeli settlement Kedumim shows a map to a tour group which highlights settler presence in Area “C” of the West bank. Source: timesofisrael.com.*

By contrast, Palestine’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities also offers “suggested itineraries” of heritage trails, culinary heritage tours, and religious pilgrimages through Palestine.<sup>17</sup> But as with heritage management, much of the Palestinian tourism falls into the private or civil sectors in practice, often under the umbrella organization Network for Experiential

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<sup>16</sup> Naber, Nadine. “The US and Israel Make the Connections for Us’: Anti-Imperialism and Black-Palestinian Solidarity.” *Critical Ethnic Studies* 3, no. 2 (2017): 15.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.travelpalestine.ps/en/category/10/1/Suggested-Itineraries>.

Palestinian Tourism Organizations (NEPTO).<sup>18</sup> These efforts can manifest as heritage trails, such as the Kafr Aqab trail offered on special occasion as a partnership between the Riwaq Center and Birzeit University (Figure 9), or as speculative World Heritage nominations, as in the case of the potential nomination of the Dheisheh Refugee Camp in south Bethlehem.<sup>19</sup> Of course, the tourist destinations can also be produced by sympathetic foreigners, as foreign dissidents to the occupation have performed within spaces of the occupation for their own agenda. The most prominent example of this is the Banksy project which opened in 2017, the “Walled Off” Hotel in Bethlehem. These approaches to alternative tourism have flourished since the second intifada concluded in 2005,<sup>20</sup> but have also been widely criticized as a form of “performative allyship,” akin to the very war profiteering they seemingly protest.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Listed at <https://nepto.ps/members/>.

<sup>19</sup> “Refugee Heritage,” e-flux architecture. <http://www.e-flux.com/architecture/refugee-heritage/>.

<sup>20</sup> Isaac, Rami Khalil. “Alternative tourism: New forms of tourism in Bethlehem for the Palestinian tourism industry.” *Current Issues in Tourism* 13, no. 1 (2010): 21.

<sup>21</sup> Cohen, Erik. “Alternative Tourism - A Critique,” *Tourism Recreation Research* 12, no. 2 (2014): 14.

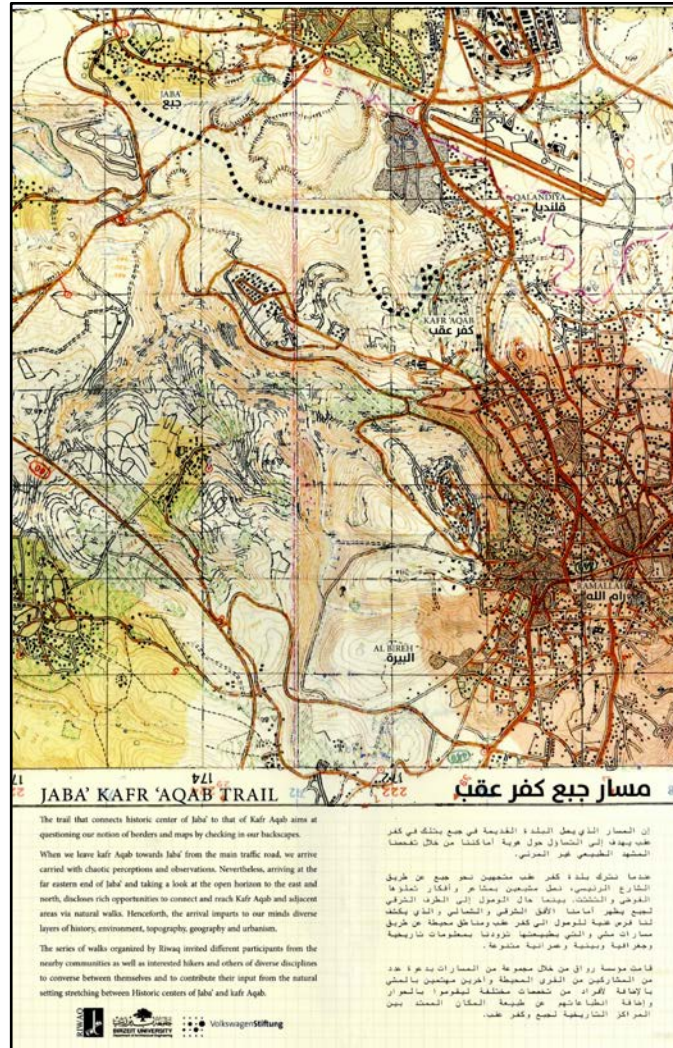


Figure 9. The Jaba-Kafr Aqab Trail map. Source: Riwaq Center.

## Palestinian Civil Society

Working within historic but very much living Palestinian villages, the Palestinian NGO Riwaq has had the requisite maneuverability, and consequent success, in both acquiring and utilizing foreign investment for regenerative heritage projects in Palestine. However, by virtue of feasibility, these projects will often focus on the late Ottoman buildings of historic centers of Palestine, in areas still accessible or within “Area A” in the OPT. Often the “traditional histories” (Smith 2006), or historic register of buildings and site, are what become initially designated and valorized due to the path dependency of how these projects are first able to be conceived. In

recognition of these biases, Riwaq has expanded more into this field of participatory practices, as they can work towards decolonizing the past processes of heritage management.

These concerns over the outcomes of humanitarian aid are not new. Layla Bahmad (2008) cites how both “the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian NGO elite have suffered [from] a weakened popularity [because] foreign aid enlarged the gap between them and their aid recipients” (p. 195). After Oslo, most of the donor funding shifted towards the PNA, but this newfound reliance the NGOs needed on the PNA for coordinating funding allocation only worked toward weakening their relationship. To its credit, Palestinian civil society’s ongoing independence from the PNA has created a new space for autonomy and resistance.<sup>22</sup>

Functioning in lieu of a state entity to report to, albeit with foreign donors to satisfy, civil society can both confront and resist, as well as perform, the work of the state. Considering this heightened responsibility to residents, the concerns over ongoing outcomes are well-founded. Eyal Weizman cites this phenomenon of the “humanitarian paradox,”<sup>23</sup> where poorly considered or implemented intervention in areas of armed conflict, however well-intentioned, works towards normalization and relieves those in military control of social responsibility.<sup>24</sup> In order to avoid these pitfalls, civil society in Palestine needs to adapt Challand’s suggestion of refocusing on a way of combining “these two dimensions (internal construction and external push for civil society) [by tying] the concept of civil society with that of autonomy.”<sup>25</sup>

These insights into the particularly complicated nature of heritage renewal processes in Palestine shows how they must remain ultimately in the hands of the local residents for eventual

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<sup>22</sup> Challand, Benoit. “Palestinian Civil Society: Foreign donors and the power to promote and exclude.” (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009): 34.

<sup>23</sup> Giorgio Agamben observed that humanitarians ‘maintain a secret solidarity with the powers they ought to fight’. For him, both sides concentrate on the ‘human’ rather than on the ‘political’ aspect of being. He further warned that ‘there are no humanitarian solutions to humanitarian problems’. See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998): 133.

<sup>24</sup> Weizman, Eyal. *Hollow Land: Israel’s Architecture of Occupation*. (London: Verso, 2007): 260.

<sup>25</sup> Challand, 35.

political *and* human/social emancipation. Fortunately, there are already potential local solutions in practice, which can serve as precedents. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolition (ICAHD) is a non-violent, local direct action<sup>26</sup> group established to resist Israeli demolition of Palestinian houses in the OPTs. ICAHD's activities have expanded to involve organizing protest, rebuilding destroyed Palestinian homes, bringing the reality of the Israeli occupation to Israeli society, as well as mobilizing the international community. The group Grassroots Jerusalem (Al Quds) created and maintains an online platform compiled by forty Palestinian communities and twice as many community-based organizations from within,<sup>27</sup> which shows the importance and potential of community mapping in this conflicted context.

### *III. An Alternative Method of Engagement*

It is clear how intervention within these geopolitically complicated contexts requires procedural reform. As an alternative response to these former attempts at valorization, an application of cultural or heritage asset mapping could provide the outside planner or heritage professional with a more nuanced inventory. In an effort to address these ongoing issues of valorizing eventually leading to exclusion, an application of mental sketch maps, created by residents of a locality themselves, would provide an alternative technique for working against these obstacles of engagement. While a seemingly viable alternative, the application of mental sketch mapping techniques has a relatively short and untested history, and particularly within the field of heritage conservation. While professional notions of testing the feasibility of these imagined localities date back to Kevin Lynch's *Image of the City* (1960), the notion of incorporating these types of techniques remains primarily linked to the growing field of critical geography and spatializing heritage (Duxbury 2015, Fairclough 2014). Their collective

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<sup>26</sup> For more background on this term, see: Graeber, David. *Direct Action: An Ethnography*. AK Press, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.grassrootsalquds.net/>

interpretations as entry points for a discussion of architectural significance beyond the monument and even beyond the building (Fairclough 2008) inform my approach to this question of value assessment in a conflicted geography. While these techniques of engagement are typically conducted over a longer time frame of years as part of a cultural mapping process, the production of mental maps can more rapidly assess significance among a sample population.

Setha Low's (2011) anthropological technique of data assessment, named rapid ethnographic assessment procedures (REAP), utilized similar methods in urban parks to elicit information regarding these more nuanced, hidden systems of exclusion. By utilizing an engaged anthropological approach as it specifically applies to heritage spaces, a more accurate depiction of the value and meaning of place can be co-authored by both residents and heritage professionals or planners. This would lead us toward the "plausible" object, as Sully (2013) describes, as an advancement from the previously valorized 'true' or 'expected' object.

The hope in using such a technique would be that it could avoid merely instrumentalizing restrictions to access and use, an unfortunate but common byproduct of historic restoration. Sulsters (2005) discusses the potential of such maps in his own research on urban identity, and their results would be grouped according to apparent overlap between demographics, "interest, or grade of experience with the area." Recognizing an underlying strength of Lynch's seminal work in this field, Sulsters articulates how not only routing, but specifically Lynch's notion of the "imageability" of urban objects could be an alternative to cultural assessment with more accurate representations of significance. While articulating his concept of commemorative 'disremembering,' Michael Landzelius (2003) states how "an essential aspect of conceptualizing disinheritance is an interdisciplinary engagement with spatiality, which brings together approaches developed across fields from politics, art, architecture, geography, heritage, and preservation" (p. 213). If a technique developed as an application of these interdisciplinary concepts is applied in a Palestinian context, the complexity of values regarding cultural heritage and its relation to sumud could begin to appear.



As a precedent, mental mapping inspired by Lynch (1960) served as a basis for some of the techniques used in 2008 by Riwaq in Birzeit to help inform their early assessment of significance (Figure 10). During our interview, Shatha explained how these maps for Birzeit were developed in three stages: legibility, typologies, and social maps.<sup>28</sup> The legibility maps were based upon Lynch's notions of paths, nodes, and edges, and led to identification of paths including particular alleys and shortcuts, as well as nodes including an old mill, mosque, church, and women's association building. Typologies were then identified across the surveys, and translated into proposed uses for the town's restoration.

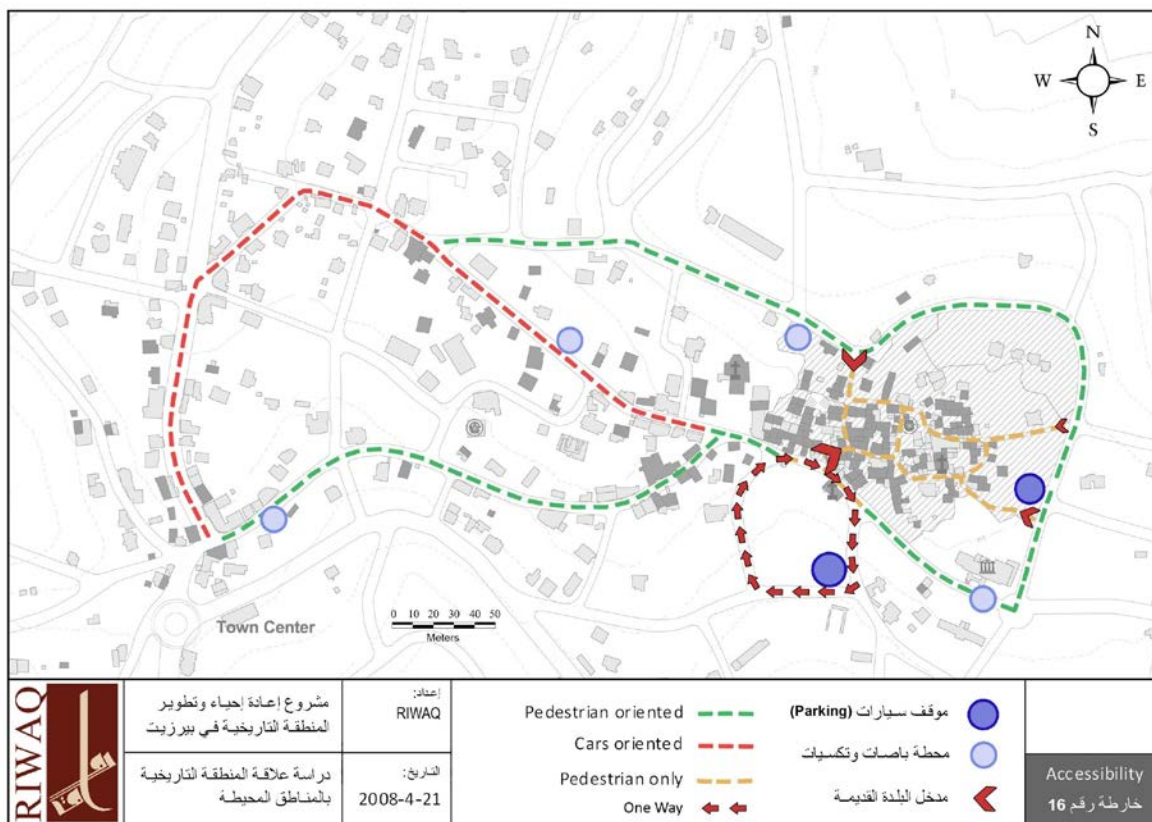


Figure 10. Street hierarchies are identified as part of the initial fieldwork in Birzeit. Riwaq, 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Shatha Safi, January 2, 2018. These were also largely facilitated by the Birzeit-based Rozana Association for the Development of Architectural Heritage ([http://rozana.ps/en/?page\\_id=7207](http://rozana.ps/en/?page_id=7207)).

### *Potential for Cultural Asset Mapping*

Cultural resource management often takes the form of an inventory, but newer applications of “critical cartography” can be utilized as an emancipatory practice.<sup>29</sup> The information gained can question earlier notions of significance, and help guide planning practices which aim to most effectively address concerns of safety and welfare in a community. We know that maps carry inherent power, and that their creation is as political a process as it is creative, being well beyond merely documentary or revelatory.<sup>30</sup> As Longley and Duxbury explain, “mapping can be a colonizing, territorial practice – or a way of undoing languages of territory and privatization.”<sup>31</sup> In this sense, there is great potential for its application in a politically contentious geography such as Beitunia. The maps could work towards articulating a subaltern political knowledge which isn’t “disembodied, abstract, and dispassionate.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, mapping could work towards locating the sites which contribute to a collective sense of sumud.

This insurgent capability of ‘counter-mapping’ could reveal the alternative geographies which Harvey’s (1989) reading of Lefebvre describes as “mental inventions” or as spatial discourses with newly imagined meanings or practical possibilities.<sup>33</sup> Within this context of indigenous dispossession, the maps could work towards breaking down the normative land tenure orders which have functioned as a key component of the occupation. Likewise, the reimaginings of modernity within this conflicted context could also be addressed, including those of “Le Corbusier --several of whose disciples became prominent Zionist planners and architects-

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<sup>29</sup> Kim, Annette. “Critical Cartography 2.0: moving from ‘participatory mapping’ to authored visualizations of power and people.” *Landscape and Urban Planning* 142, (2015): 216.

<sup>30</sup> Harley, J. B. “Deconstructing the Map.” *Cartographica* 26, no. 2 (1989): 18.

<sup>31</sup> Longsley, Alys, and Nancy Duxbury. “Introduction: Mapping cultural intangibles.” *City, Culture and Society* 7, no. 1 (2016): 1.

<sup>32</sup> Bishara, Amahl. “Driving while Palestinian in Israel and the West Bank: The politics of disorientation and the routes of a subaltern knowledge.” *American Ethnologist* 42, no. 1 (2015): 48.

<sup>33</sup> Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1989), 219.

- [who] quoted a famous Turkish proverb to epitomize the modernist ethic: “Where one builds one plants trees. We root them up.” Lefebvre explains the process more critically when he informs us that “the ‘plan’ does not remain innocently on paper. On the ground, the bulldozer realizes ‘plans.’”<sup>34</sup> How, then, can we assess the access to memory amid settler displacement of indigenous sovereignty? As Peake and Shepard (2014) ask, “has radical/critical geography succeeded in its aim of increasing access to the means of knowledge production, through both pedagogy and research, to become a peoples’ geography that is grounded in a desire to work towards change through praxis?” Incrementally, yes, but through the application of mental sketch mapping techniques in a conflicted geography, we may begin to see the potentials for this technique as liberatory regarding knowledge production. Particularly in the case of Beitunia, the concept of sumud could be attributed to distinct spaces, visualizing heritage values of where residents are proud to remain steadfast.

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<sup>34</sup> LeVine, Mark. *Overthrowing Geography: Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and the Struggle for Palestine, 1880-1949*. (Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 2005): 238.

## Chapter 3 - Case Study

### *Introduction to the heritage place: Beitunia, Palestine*

The municipality of Beitunia is located three kilometers west of Ramallah and fourteen kilometers north of Jerusalem in the West Bank of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). Originally a Christian settlement, Ramallah, literally “the hill of God,” transformed drastically from the influx of Palestinian refugees after the 1948 establishment of the State of Israel and consequent Nakba, or “catastrophe,” which involved the expulsion of Palestinians living within the State’s new borders. Ramallah maintains administrative relevance by virtue or path dependence of its importance as the regional headquarters of the British Mandate until 1948.<sup>35</sup> Ramallah, Al Bireh, and Beitunia form the metropolitan area which serves as the de facto, or temporary administrative, capital region of the OPTs, to use United Nations terminology. From the official Israeli perspective, these municipalities are mere remnants of an ‘Arab Occupation’ of originally Jewish lands, and fall within the commuter-shed of the true hub of urban life nearby: Jerusalem.

With a registered population of 19,761 as of the last census in 2007, Beitunia is located near and surrounded by prominent aspects of the Israeli occupation, while also representative of higher real estate demand on urban peripheries. These components of the occupation include the growing extent of Israeli settlements, specifically Psagot just east of Ramallah, which have gradually, strategically occupied Palestinian land while preventing further outward growth of the Palestinian towns to which they are adjacent. Through utilizing a loophole in Ottoman agrarian laws which preceded the British Mandate, Israel justifies its expansion to within strategic, hillside proximity to Palestinian built-up areas by appropriating lands considered

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<sup>35</sup> Shaheen, Azeez. Ramallah: Its History and Its Genealogies, Birzeit University, 1982.

“collective,” as they were uncultivated at higher elevations.<sup>36</sup> Just south and down the slope from Beitunia is the Ofer prison, a former Jordanian military base and now the largest detention facility operated by Israel in the West Bank. It is connected to the network of Israel-controlled highways which deliberately cut through the West Bank in a manner which only makes Israeli settlements prominent, thereby further disorienting and alienating its non-Israeli residents from each other. This experiential nature of the occupation is realized through driving the landscape, itself clearly delineated between “safe” Israeli-controlled areas with convenient access to the highways, and those marked with large, red signs in three languages as “dangerous.”<sup>37</sup>

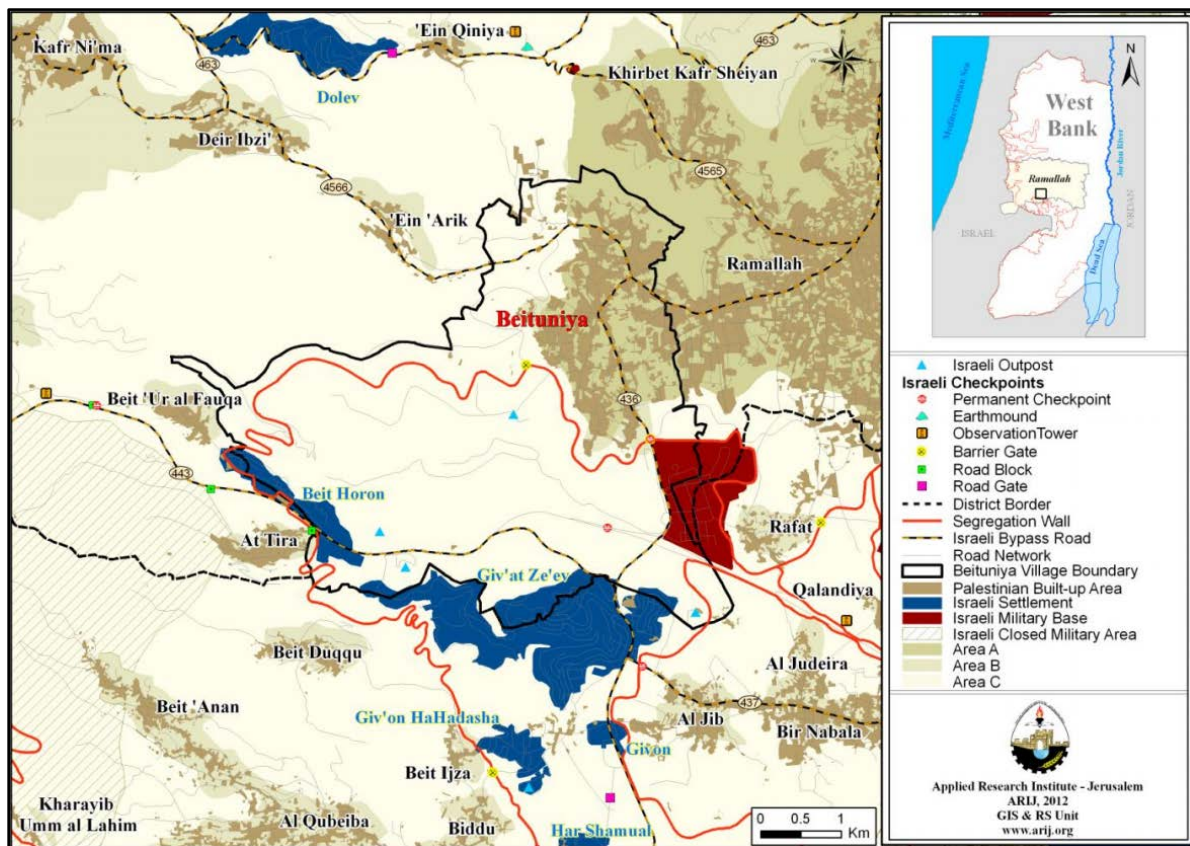


Figure 11. Locator map of Beitunia and its environs. Source: ARIJ.

<sup>36</sup> “Manual of Decolonization.” *Decolonizing Architecture: scenarios for the transformation of Israeli settlements*. (Salottobuono, 2008), 19.

<sup>37</sup> Bishara, 37.

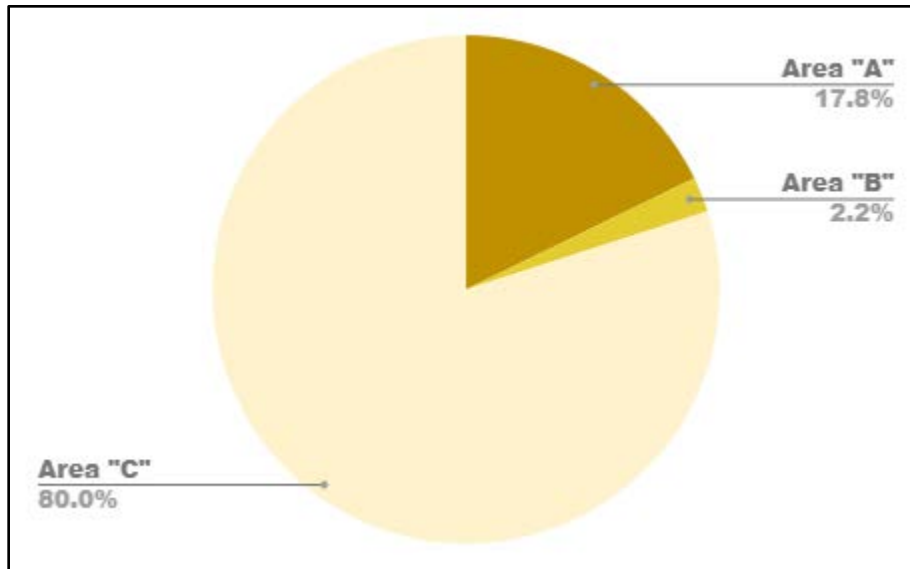
Despite its close proximity to Ramallah, Beitunia remains socio-spatially disconnected due to both the constriction of surrounding land by the Israeli occupation and the large Industrial Zone as a partition. Following the start of the Israeli occupation in 1967, and Oslo processes in 1993 and 1995 which have proven to have merely opened up the Palestinian economy to the negative impacts of neoliberalization (Haddad 2016), an increased demand on stable urban, developable space has gradually eroded the total land use within the Beitunia municipality. With this industrial use as the interstitial space between itself and the de facto capital of the OPTs, Beitunia has become more of a residentially-focused community with a largely retired, unemployed, or commuter population.<sup>38</sup>

Land confiscation due to the Israeli occupation has marked the visual and physical accessibility of the landscape. The Oslo agreements in 1993 and 1995 also created the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), a new, neoliberal state apparatus of the Occupied Palestinian Territories which has only enabled the further occupation and enclosure of the urbanized areas in Palestine. While the historic total area of Beitunia, in dunams or 1000 square meters, is 21,127, of that area only the parts considered “A” or most of “B” are accessible to Palestinians. The remaining land area follows:

- Area "A" - 3,759 dunams
- Area "B" - 472 dunams
- Area "C" - 16,896 dunams

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<sup>38</sup> Beituniya Town Profile, The Jerusalem Applied Research Institute, Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID), 2012.



*Figure 12. Relative percentages of Beitunia land, by "Area" designation.*

Of these, 21,127 dunams, the municipality has also defined the following totals of land use:

- Built up area 2,158 dunams
- Agricultural area 7,787 dunams
- Lands Directly Confiscated by Israeli Occupation 1,946 dunams

This shows how even among the land area which hasn't been directly confiscated, Israel has indirectly confiscated the vast majority, over 80%, of Beitunia's former land from Area "C" demarcation. Israel's policies of restrictions on movement in the OPTs are meant to intimidate and pressure Palestinians into gradual complicity with the total control of their former state by, while using the justification of safety for its growing settler population, now totaling over 800,000 in the West Bank including East Jerusalem.<sup>39</sup> As Patrick Wolfe explains in his description of the logic of elimination, "whatever settlers may say—and they generally have a lot to say—the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but

<sup>39</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, Localities in Israel, 2016.

access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element."<sup>40</sup> In the exceptional case of Israel/Palestine, the target of colonization is the place itself, a process Hanafi (2009) describes as "spacio-cide." While Beitunia experienced an influx of population after the 1948 Nakba -- or expulsion of Palestinians from land declared part of the new State of Israel -- it wasn't until the 1967 occupation of Palestine that its native population faced the more direct imposition of land tenure rights violations from Israeli restrictions on peripheral space. Indeed, "to get in the way of settler colonization, all the native has to do is stay at home."<sup>41</sup>

### *Significance of the heritage place*

The Old Town of Beitunia elicits both memorial and present-day social and aesthetic values, including those which embody the concept of *sumud*. While its oldest architecture dates to the late-Ottoman period, several early examples of Palestinian Modernism from the 1920s during British Occupation also remain in various states of deterioration among the Ottoman architecture in the Old Town. Beitunia's high altitude and dramatic landscape of sloping agricultural land which surrounds it demonstrates the cultural significance of the emphasis on agricultural livelihoods and a close connection to the cultivation of this land. Due to the Zionist commitment to the importance of self-sufficiency and "productivization,"<sup>42</sup> the settler colonial project within the West Bank directly targets this agricultural significance of Beitunia. Both from the time- and space-based exclusionary practices of Israel, this former significance has slowly eroded from the everyday practices of the municipality's residents. In spite of these "internalized borders"<sup>43</sup> which the Israeli occupation utilizes in lieu of official, universally accepted boundaries, much of the core of the Beitunia Old Town has persisted physically and cognitively

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<sup>40</sup> Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8, no. 4. 2006, p. 388.

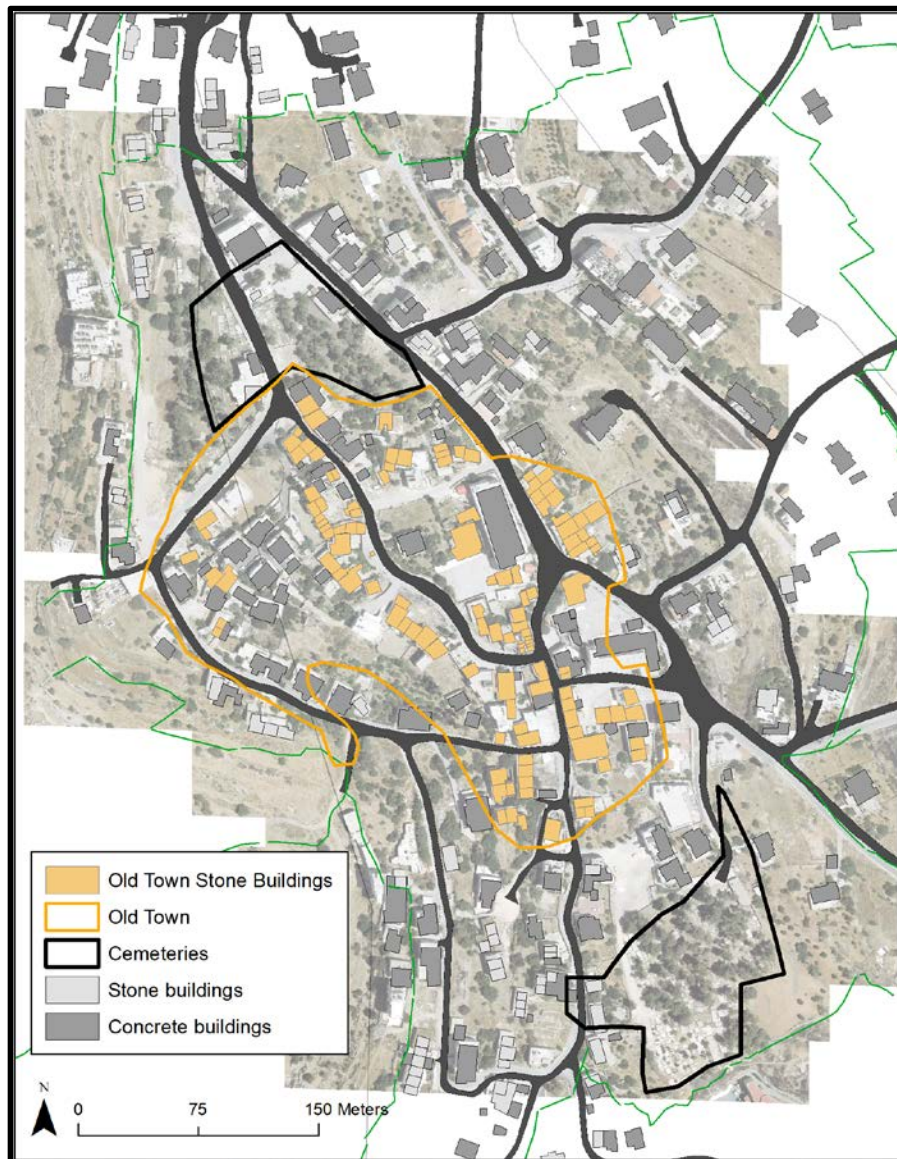
<sup>41</sup> Rose, Deborah Bird. *Hidden Histories: Black Stories from Victoria River Downs, Humbert River and Wave Hill Stations*. (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1991): 46.

<sup>42</sup> Wolfe, 389.

<sup>43</sup> Shoshan, Malkit. *Atlas of the Conflict: Israel-Palestine*. Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 2010, 12.



for its current and former residents. This historic core (Figure 13) is exemplified by the remaining agricultural building typologies which utilize stone vaulting systems and, in many cases, elevated basements as spaces for livestock. The current conditions are comprised of a mixture of these stone buildings as well as new, concrete architecture built to meet the demands for space in a municipality close to the seemingly necessary foreign aid funneled through Ramallah.



*Figure 13. Stone buildings are highlighted in light grey, and those within the Old Town perimeter in orange.*

### *Synthesis of conditions affecting conservation and management*

The challenges Palestinians are confronted with regarding heritage conservation today stem from the original British occupation following World War I. The British developed the first legal framework for the protection of cultural heritage in Palestine during the British Mandate as the 1929 Antiquities Law. This law formed the basis for all subsequent legal frameworks in the country, as it was adopted by the Egyptians in Gaza, and revised by the Jordanians in the West Bank in 1966. After the aforementioned establishment of the PNA, this state entity adopted the Jordanian law as is, and it remains as another stagnant legacy of colonization.<sup>44</sup>

This standing Jordanian law problematically continues this outside perspective on heritage, as it only protects antiquities which are dated prior to 1700 AD. This disregards the entire Ottoman period as well as any subsequent years, even on sites that are declared as antiquities. Moreover, there is no single unified legal framework for Palestine where a range of different laws apply. Without any solid constitutional basis for protecting cultural heritage, there are no clear structures or divisions of responsibilities between institutions. Existing laws do not consider the public as stakeholders, but rather continue the problematic former practices of handling antiquities as objects isolated from their provenance.

Beyond the vast social and economic challenges, the occupation compromises the functional integrity of the heritage place of Old Beitunia due to its seizure of peripheral land. A central challenge to the heritage management of Beitunia is understanding significance and authenticity when the fundamental connections to heritage no longer exist. Disconnected from the agricultural land which defined it for so long, the remnants of Old Beitunia have been dislodged from their potential significance due to the ensuing increase in new concrete construction to meet the needs and aspirations of the changing community.

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<sup>44</sup> Bshara, Khaldun. "Heritage in Palestine: Colonial Legacy in Postcolonial Discourse." *Journals of the World Archaeological Congress* 9, no. 2 (2013): 304.

While Beitunia has a steadily shrinking population since the second Intifada ended in 2005, the total population remains around 40% younger than 15 in age, which depicts the immense age gap all too common in areas of conflict. The economy in Beitunia, deeply affected by neoliberalization since the Oslo agreements, is dependent mainly on the Government Sector; of those who are employed, around 37% work for the Palestinian Authority, either for the Municipality directly or through the Ministry of Education as teachers. The unemployment rate in Beitunia reached 25% in 2012, and the Municipality found the most vulnerable social group to be workers in the agricultural sector, as a direct result of Israeli actions.<sup>45</sup> Ironically, the agricultural emphasis on a new, aforementioned “productivization” of a Jewish population in Israel maintains the legacy of anti-Semitism from Europe.<sup>46</sup> Justification of land seizure which underpins the settler colonial project promotes this “conquest of labour,” favoring ethno-national aspirations instead of more inclusive economic efficiency. Furthermore, these processes favoring the politicization of land, as part of the local, conflicted heritage, have left it open to outside forces of commodification.

With these pressing social and economic conditions, only the local NGO the Riwaq Center and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities have had the capacity for acting locally in Beitunia. Their current approach to the identification of cultural heritage assets in Beitunia initially follows the standardized model of heritage valorization by focusing on older, stone architecture and its material restoration. Both are heavily dependent on outside sponsorship, in particular by organizations such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. However, in recent years the Riwaq Center has expanded its approach in terms of outreach to the local community, utilizing interviews and oral history for improved assessment during its earliest phases of research in the municipality. This shift in approach relates to the

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<sup>45</sup> Beituniya Town Profile, The Jerusalem Applied Research Institute, Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID), 2012.

<sup>46</sup> Shafir, Gershon. *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 81.

broader field of heritage conservation, but also how it has been applied to their specific projects. Approaching the complexities of architecture from this perspective, its various meanings and contradictory representations of past state power or social influence become additional aspects of potential interpretation.<sup>47</sup>

As an example of the issues inherent with projects guided by foreign aid, their initial project in Beitunia, the Women's Association completed in 2002 (Figure 14), hasn't remained the center of social activity its donors would have likely imagined. Instead, the Women's Association utilized adjacent, unoccupied stone buildings for additional use, as the architecture better met the space needs for specific activities, namely cooking and meal preparation.<sup>48</sup> As a consequence of this socially and geopolitically complicated context, any remotely successful management system for Beitunia would need to be uniquely adaptive.



*Figure 14. Front entrance of the Beitunia Women's Association. January 2018.*

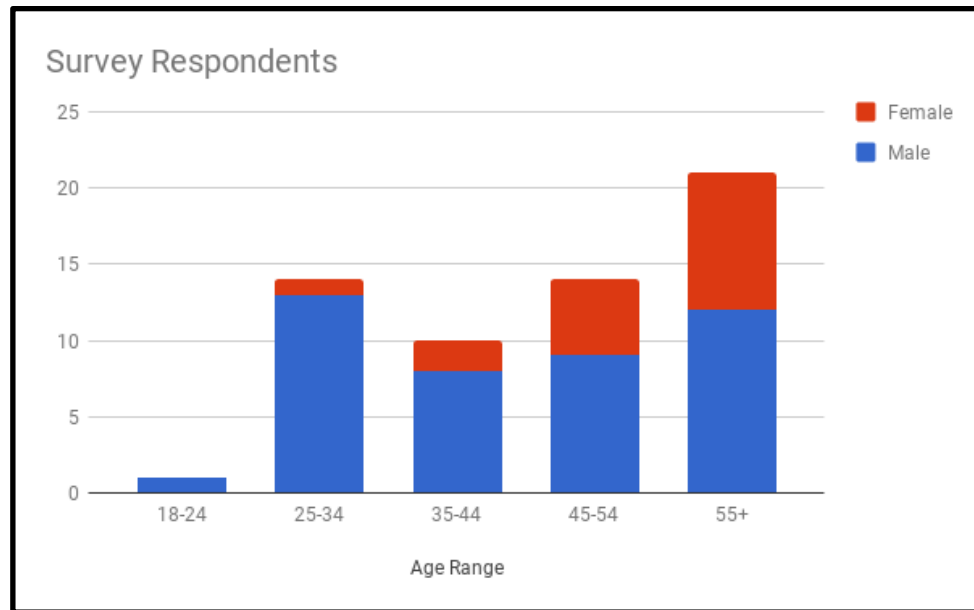
<sup>47</sup> Bshara, Khaldun. "The Ottoman Saraya: All That Did Not Remain." *Jerusalem Quarterly* 69, (2017): 75.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Shatha Safi, January 2, 2018.

## Chapter 4 - Findings and Analysis

### Findings

While we surveyed on different days of the week, and during the evening on one of the days, the total of sixty respondents tended to be older and male, as shown in the following graph:



*Figure 15. Survey respondents by age range and gender. The results show how an additional category beyond 55+ would have helped with data accuracy. The results were also likely skewed slightly from how both my translator and myself are young men.*

Even within the first few interviews, reluctance to viewing Beitunia from the plan perspective confirmed my concern of the method's applicability. Often, the map sketching exercise created more pertinent information to the significance of buildings and spaces at the margins of the map than within its aerial photography alone. The maps, as interpreted into ArcGIS, show exactly what was drawn, but the significance of these spaces is discussed further in the Analysis section. As an example of this process, Figure 16 shows the first step of moving the sketched survey information into the ArcMap platform.



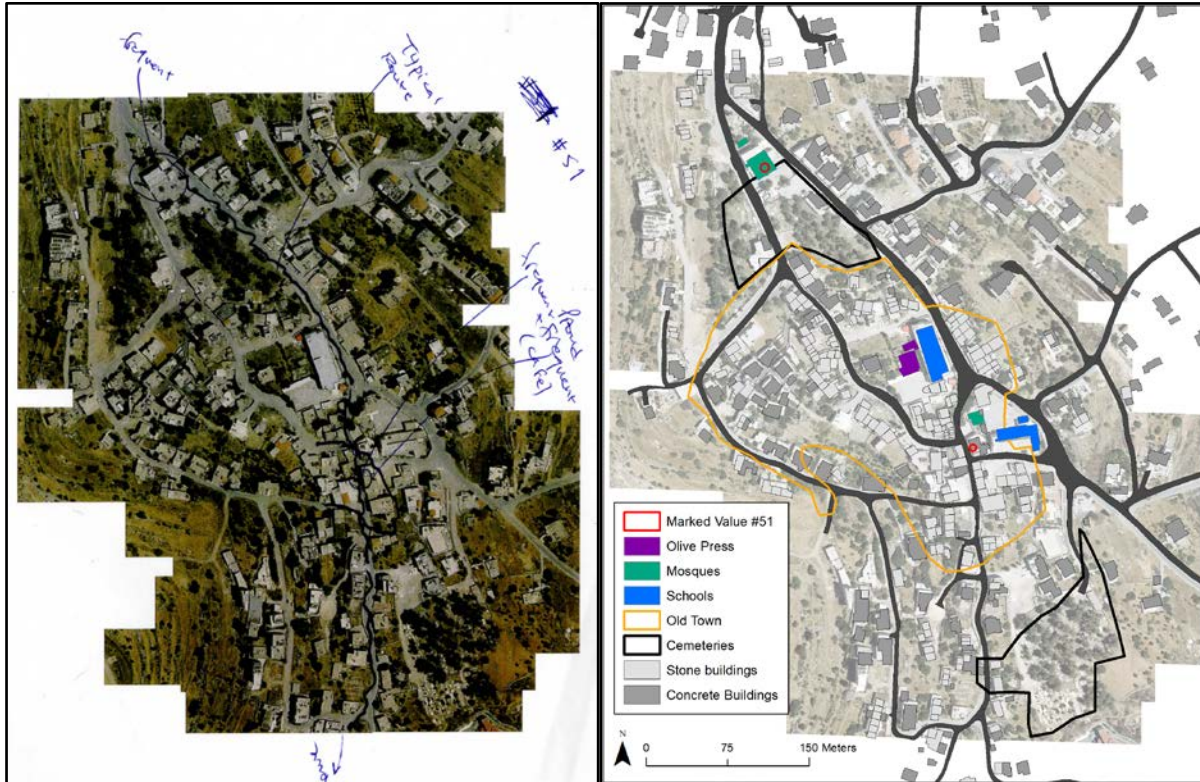
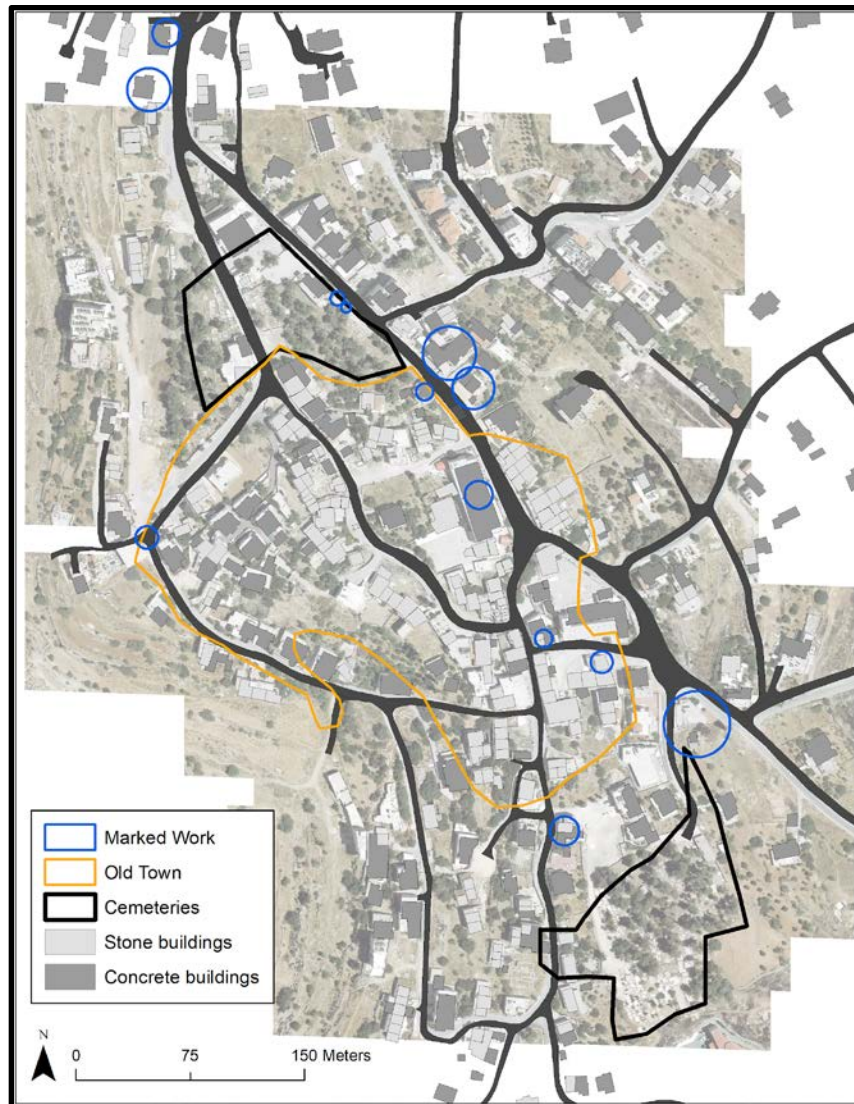


Figure 16. Survey #51 as written during interview (left), then translated into ArcMap (right), in red.

These responses were then assembled into shapefiles for each type of response related to cultural value, residence, and workplace, allowing the results to be compared at once using ArcMap.

### *Economic Value*

Of the sixty respondents, just thirteen (21.7%) were currently working in or near the Beitunia Old Town (Figure 17), showing the nature of the study area as primarily residential in relation to the newer part of Beitunia and Ramallah. Moreover, only two (15.4%) of these marked places of work were in older stone buildings, and both had some concrete additions:

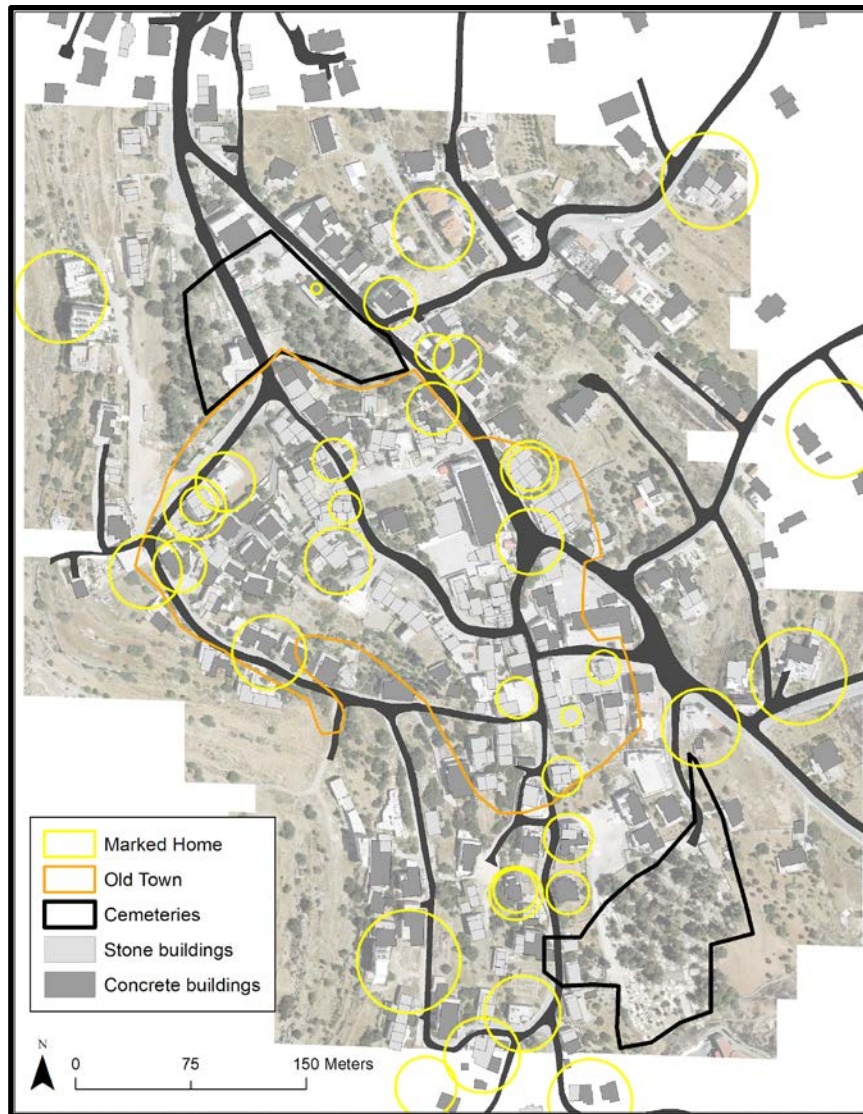


*Figure 17. Sites of the thirteen marked places of work, in and just outside of the Old Town.*

### *Residential Value*

Substantially more - forty-four or 73.3% - interviewees marked their nearby sense of what they consider home, shown in Figure 18. These were more evenly split between new and old building typologies, even among those living outside of the boundaries of the Old Town assigned by the Municipality:





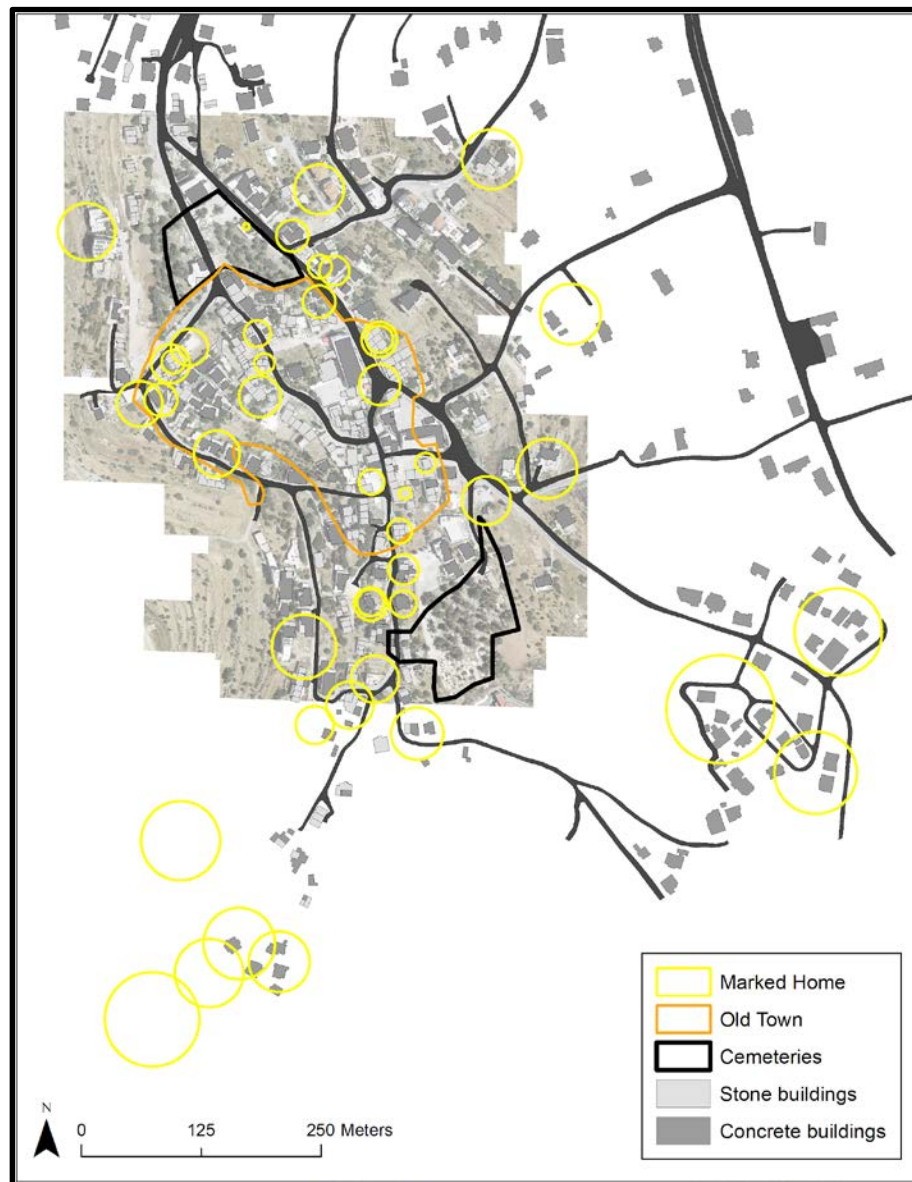
*Figure 18. The extents of what was considered home to the residents near the Old Town.*

Just ten (16.7%) of those who didn't mark their idea of home did so because of how they ascribe their idea of home beyond the municipality of Beitunia, which conveyed the lower percentage of residents who aren't as connected to Beitunia. These areas marked also began to demonstrate some of the more distinct neighborhoods within and around Beitunia's Old Town. This also revealed how only seventeen of the forty-four (38.6%) were marked within the designated boundaries of the Old Town,<sup>49</sup> while eight of the forty-four (18.2%) were off the map,

<sup>49</sup> "Within" is defined by the spatial selection method of having their centroid in the Old Town boundary.



south of the Old Town (Figure 19). Of these eight who marked as being off the map, six had moved to Beitunia, and only two were originally from there. This showed how the peripheries tended to be where the new residents were able to settle, which was also confirmed through field observations discussed in the next section of this chapter.

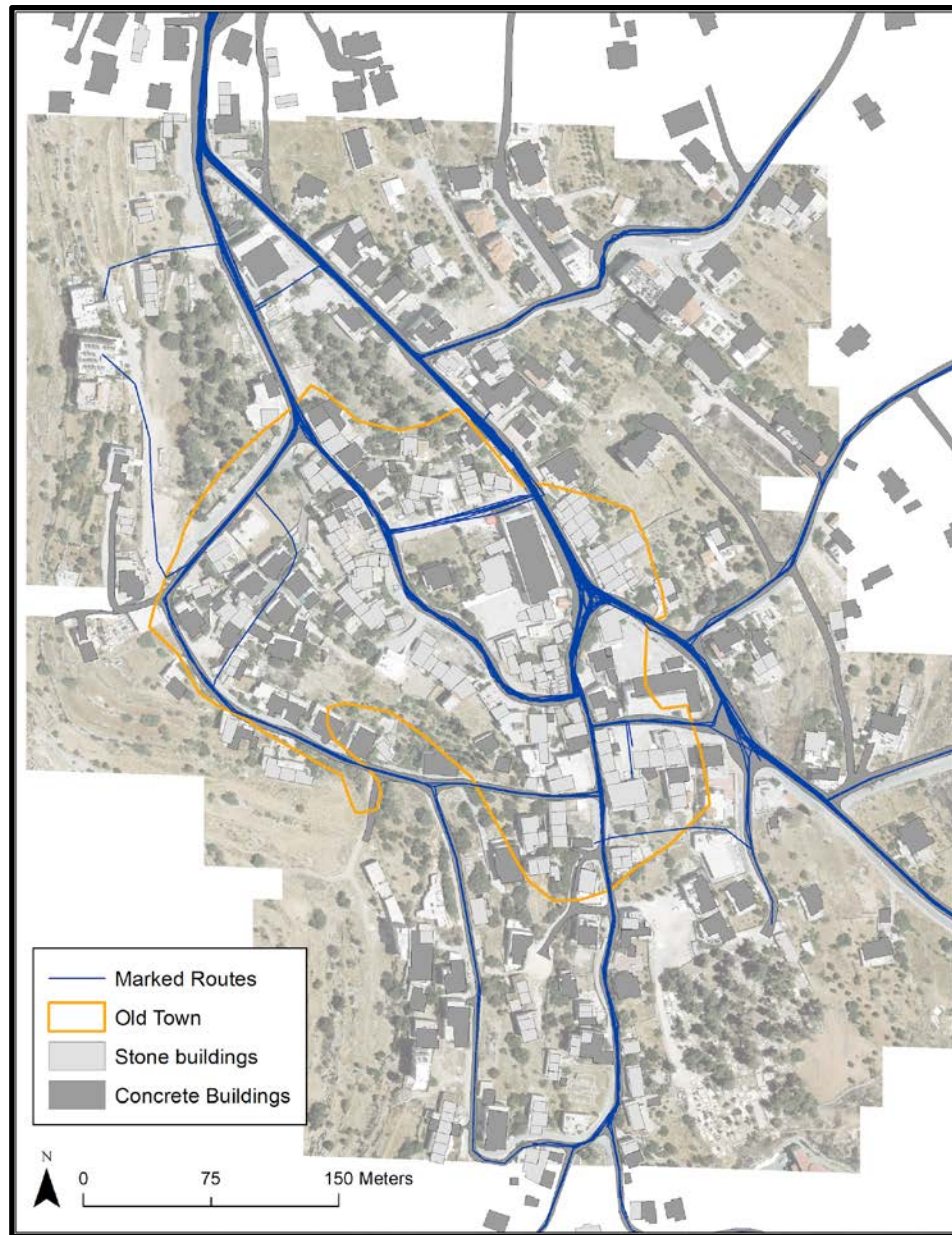


*Figure 19. Zoomed out to see the marked areas considered home which were off the map. This also demonstrated the need for updating the building and road shapefiles acquired from Riwaq and the Municipality.*

A majority of thirty-four (77.27%) of the forty-four interviewees who marked nearby areas of home were born and raised in Beitunia, showing a largely enduring population. Additionally, five of the residents shared how they had moved to Beitunia as a direct result of the occupation (including one resident who was expelled from Ajjur during the Nakba), either from the presence of Israeli settlers or soldiers infringing on their former homes. This included three residents (#45, 47, and 60) who explained how they were originally from the now-demolished Palestinian village of Yalo before seeking refuge in Beitunia. In this sense, Beitunia gains significance as a site which exemplifies the concept of sumud in that it does allow for residential development.

### *Routes*

The individual, most traveled routes convey a sense of the relative use of the different pathways connecting these aforementioned destinations in Beitunia:

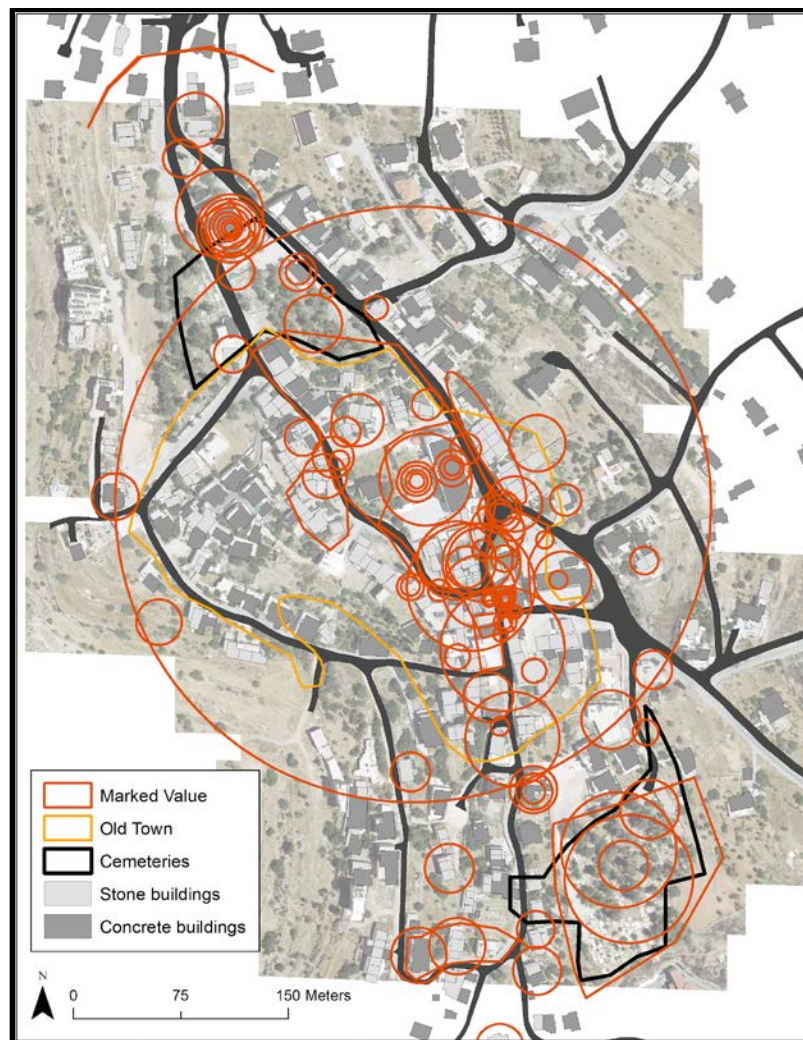


*Figure 20. Sketched routes assembled into one map.*

Of the fifty-four sketched, forty (74.1%) preferred using the widest roadway on the eastern edge of the Old Town. Whereas only seventeen (31.5%) used the road on the west, and only ten used the narrower road in the center of the Old Town, which fronts the Women's Association. Only thirteen (24.1%) sketched a route which went south of the Old Town boundary, which indicates how much more residential this part of the municipality becomes.

## *Cultural Value*

While places of work or places considered home only elicited individual markings, places of cultural or social value were marked either individually in 26/53 (49%) cases or in multiple locations in 27/53 (51%) cases. With fifty-three (88.3%) of the sixty surveys marking spots of cultural significance, the compilation of these locations creates an initially chaotic image (Figure 21). However, it also confirmed the value of some additional nodes of activity and architecture outside of the Old Town boundaries. While some of this value is always inherently changing, the assemblage of these results begins to show where the concept of sumud can begin to be assessed beyond the recognized monuments.



*Figure 21. All fifty-three of the cultural value markings compiled.*



While these responses are deciphered more in the analysis, the main takeaways are how of these fifty-three, thirty-two (60.4%) or just over half of the interviewees marked areas of significance which were contained within the Old Town boundaries. Additionally, how the individual buildings with the most collective, direct markings were unsurprisingly the Grand Mosque near the northern entrance to the Old Town, with ten (18.9%), and the smaller mosque and surrounding buildings, with between four to six individual markings. The cemeteries each had six individual markings, as well. The aforementioned olive press had four, plus two it shared with the adjacent, modern school, which individually had three of its own.

#### *Traditional Cultural Resources*

A few locations do overlap with those identified from the interviews when referring back to the official archaeological and building shapefiles acquired from Riwaq and the Municipality:

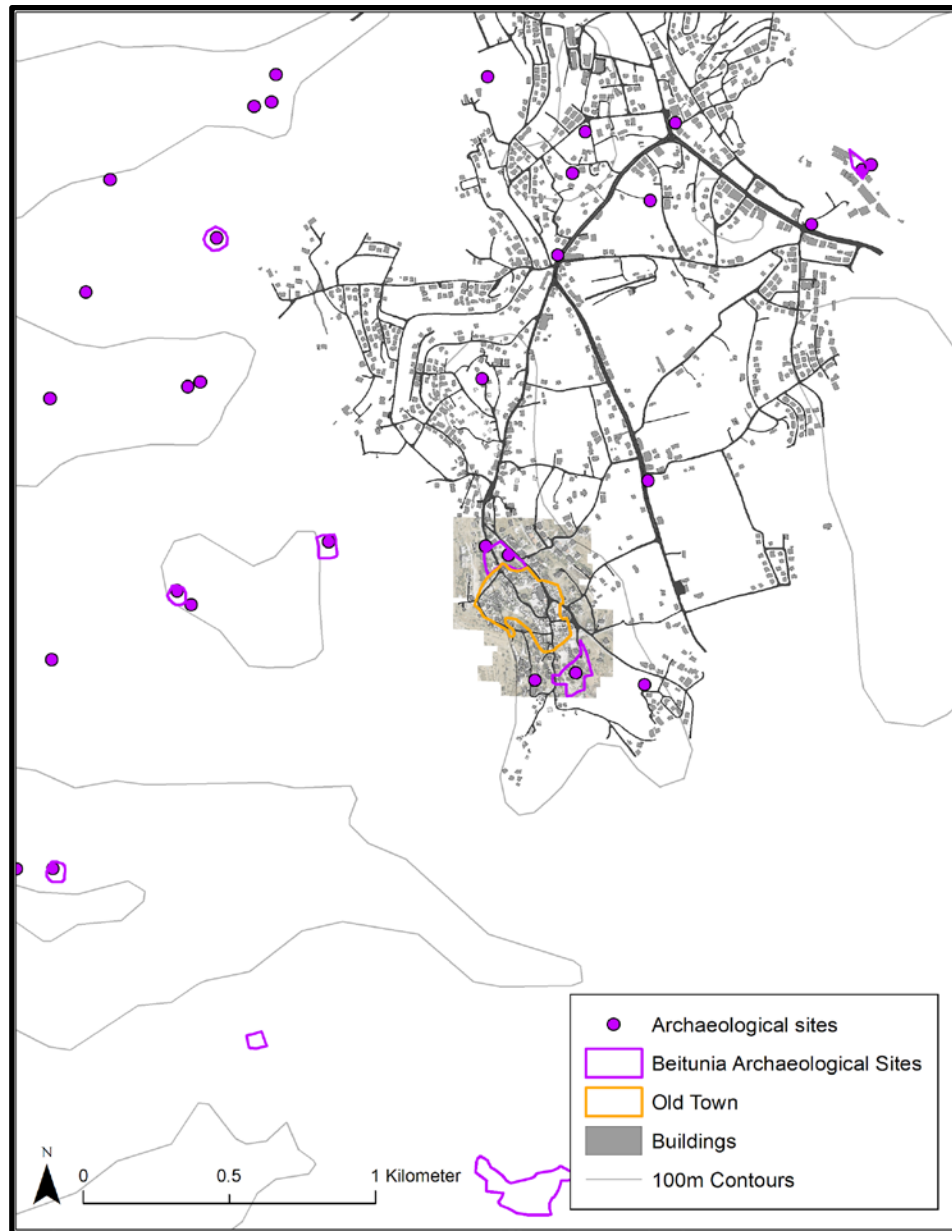


Figure 22. Archaeological sites in and around Beitunia. Also pictured is the urban extent of the newer part of Beitunia, and 100-meter contour lines.

One overlap (Interview #11) involved the significance of a cistern which is also in the archaeological dataset, just south of the boundary of the Old Town. Another involved the discussion of a “Golden Mountain” (Interview #29), which referred to the archaeological riches inside of the hilltop directly west of Beitunia. The archaeological data listed these as two individual khirbet or ruins, as well as an old lime kiln. More significantly, these were the only

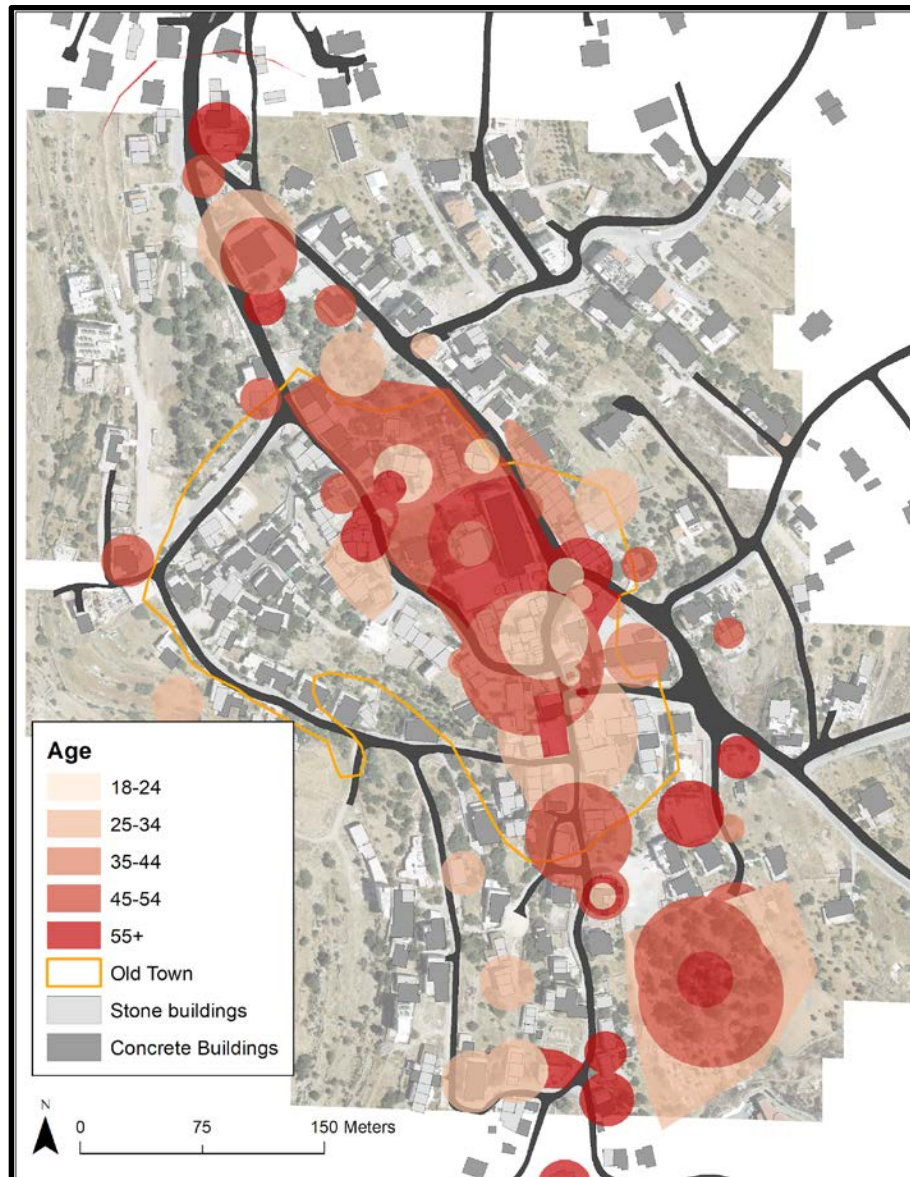
specific instances of overlap between collected data besides the cemeteries, which speaks to the need for reforming the dataset to include broader definitions of significance in order gain a better sense of sumud.

### *Analysis*

In order to analyze the spatialized cultural values elicited, survey responses were then grouped into categories according to Age Range, Gender, and Relation to Beitunia. Each of these images convey the averages among these categories according to each marked location, meaning that while not every individual entry appears in these graphics, the average category is represented according to what was marked during the surveys. This allows for a spatial parsing of each category to find any trends among the data.

### *Values by Age*

Each cultural value response for age was assigned a value 1-5 for the surveyed categories of 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and 55+, respectively. The results are as follows:



*Figure 23. Cultural values marked by age category.*

These results begin to demonstrate the parts of the municipality which are valued primarily by those surveyed who were younger (lighter red), such as the more residential areas at the periphery, as well as those areas valued primary by those who were older (darker red), including the newer school. Most pertinent to the research are the areas discovered which have ascribed value from a variety of age groups. These include the cemeteries, Al-Fallujah square, the mosques, and the area where I first encountered a seating arrangement within a parking spot during the Summer 2017 fieldwork, which is seen again here in January 2018:



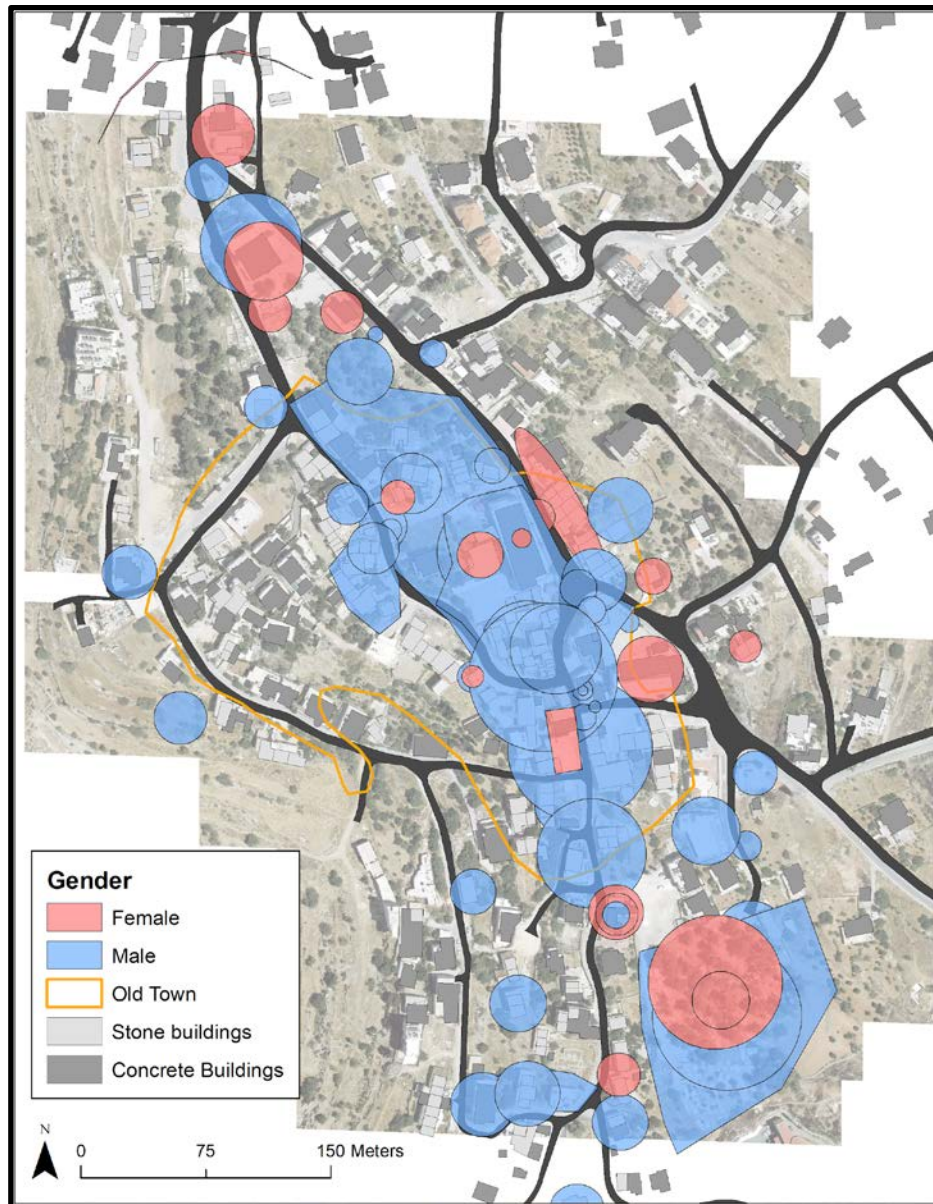


*Figure 24. The same parking-spot-turned-social-space as Figure 5, with only one bench this time. An architect from Riwaq and local contractor can be seen on the roof of the olive press in the background. January 2018.*

According to both Riwaq's past research and our Interview #33, this particular space within the Old Town is also adjacent to where an old oven had been, which served as part of the centrality of this space before demolition of much of its historic fabric in order to widen the road. These results show how a regenerative project which focuses more on this particular space would be of great potential across generations.

#### *Values by Gender*

The cultural value responses were also assigned their corresponding gender entry, which allowed for this spatial comparison to be created:



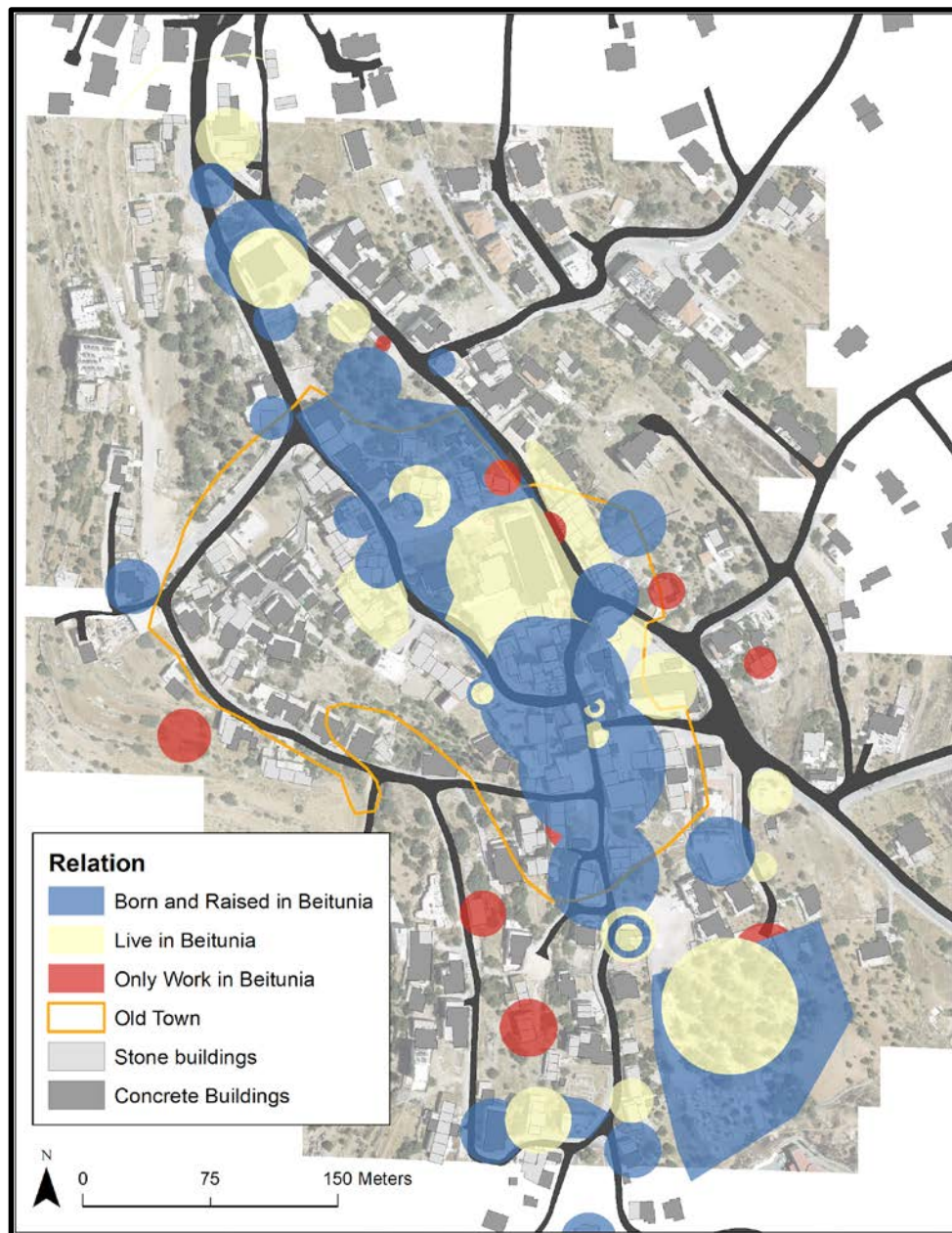
*Figure 25. Cultural values marked according to gender.*

This conveys how the majority of respondents were male, as well as the distinct sites of significance for women, which were focused less along the public streets and more within a few of the residential buildings or schools. Once again, the cemeteries and mosques were the primary sites of overlap.



### *Relation to Beitunia*

In order to distinguish values between those with different connections or relations to Beitunia, this variable was grouped into: those who were born and raised in Beitunia, those who reside in Beitunia but had moved from elsewhere, and those who only worked in Beitunia. The results follow:



*Figure 26. Cultural values marked by relation to Beitunia.*

Due to the majority (34/60 or 56.7%) of residents originally from Beitunia, most of the Old Town is marked by their value assessment (in blue). This also demonstrated how relatively disparate the sites of value were among those interviewees who only worked in Beitunia (in red), with the exception once again of the oldest cemetery. An interesting discrepancy appears to show how the more monumental buildings, including the olive press and modern schools, are more recognized landmarks among those who weren't originally from Beitunia but had moved there (in yellow), whereas the remaining fabric of stone architecture is more recognized by the life-long residents (in blue).

One of the main sites of overlap between long-time residents and newcomers is on the periphery of the drawn border of the Old Town. It is around the entrance from the north into the Old Town, and currently features imagery of both Yasser Arafat and Saddam Hussein:



*Figure 27. Buildings near the wider entrance to the Old Town from the north, with Al-Fallujah Square in the distance on the left. January 2018.*

The mixture of residential and commercial uses, along with its location as a transitional zone between the new and old town, makes this another prime site for the municipality and supporting NGOs to consider for redevelopment projects. The routing analysis confirms this road as the main thoroughfare between both Beitunias, as well. In this building cluster, we can begin to see how the concept of sumud includes but can also extend beyond the limits of an extant historic core of buildings.

### *Evaluation of Mapping Results*

While several of these findings from the mapping exercise could likely have been uncovered through alternate means, such as a more involved oral history, ethnography, or cultural mapping, the technique allowed for us, as outside researchers, to add nuance to how Beitunians apparently perceive their own complex landscape. However, many of the interviewees preferred to just explain their main concerns or stories than mark them on the map, and one interview (#8) opted not to participate in the mapping exercise at all. Even during one of the more accommodating interviews (#10), the participant stated his reluctance to viewing the Old Town from this perspective. This shows how in further research, the perspective on the Old Town should be modified from only the plan perspective in order to improve the quality of participation.

The results of spatializing these values begin to show some trends between different social connections to Beitunia, but they also definitively show the amount of spaces (40%) *outside* of the Old Town designation, which should be considered as part of the municipality's significance assessment. In this way, the results work toward the notion of uncovering the "plausible" (Sully 2013) object, rather than the traditionally "expected" or "true." However, the results would benefit from a more distinct parsing of the differences between social and cultural values, as well as from an engagement with basemaps at different scales, rather than one focusing on the recognized heritage assets.

### *Field Observations*

To further assess the relationship between the heritage discourse and on-the-ground reality or lived experience in Beitunia, we also compiled results of more qualitative field observations. We wanted to take this approach since the occupation is experienced and felt through all senses. Visually, the infrastructure of Israeli fences and walls, as well as reactive countermeasures such as the proliferation of water tanks, represent these social divisions in a

visceral way. Much of the experience is lost in drawings and renderings, and must be supported by the experiential knowledge of those who create them. Furthermore, as Weizman argues, “architectural practice in conflict zones could similarly [to Médecins Sans Frontières] incorporate the ethical motivations, and the methodological capacities, for bearing professional witness to those crimes conducted through the transformation of the built environment” (2007, 260).

As we beared witness, we noted how the prevalence of concrete additions on the historic stone architecture reflects the lack of local legislation for heritage preservation, itself a built product of the British and Israeli settler colonial projects, but also the attendant, everyday needs and aspirations of the local Palestinian population. Along with these additions, we witnessed several other subtle but telling ways in which the occupation is expressed in the built environment. Moreover, most of our field observations were referred to in the interviews, and either allowed us to later recognize these otherwise unseen places or phenomena, or to be reminded of them during an interview. Some of the interviews confirmed a concern we had entering the process of how the conservation efforts can eventually lead towards spatial exclusion of Beitunians from the restored buildings. Even with the help of a translator, there was still difficulty in standardizing these open-ended questions due to the language and cultural barriers. As a result, I’ve instead analyzed the main phenomena of concern which were apparent through translations of the interviews.

We discovered how one of the places “Jerusalem” stone, which has become ubiquitous cladding in both Palestine and Israel (Weizman 2007, 33), is sourced by Israel is just east of Beitunia, within Area “A.” Salem and I located a quarry just east of the nearby Beitunia checkpoint, which allowed for Israeli trucks to access these limestone resources for the Israeli economy. Interview #29 discussed this phenomenon further, by telling us about how Israelis had apparently disassembled a well near the Ofer prison two months prior in order to sell the stones. Relatedly, close proximity to the Ofer prison, and the surrounding Israeli highways, has become a visceral component of the everyday life in Beitunia. Four of the interviews (#17, 22, 29, and

37) brought this former Jordanian military base up as a main annoyance, which limits their access to the surrounding land which had been as essential aspect of Beitunia. From Beitunia's elevation, a panoramic view of the prison, highway, checkpoint, and settlement urbanisms is visible. The distinct red roofs and ordered, suburban structure of these hilltop settlements makes them readily apparent on the landscape, and their visual recognition serves a militaristic purpose (Weizman 2007, 127). Walking the extent of the municipality gives one a strong sense of the deliberate enclosure by the Israeli occupation.

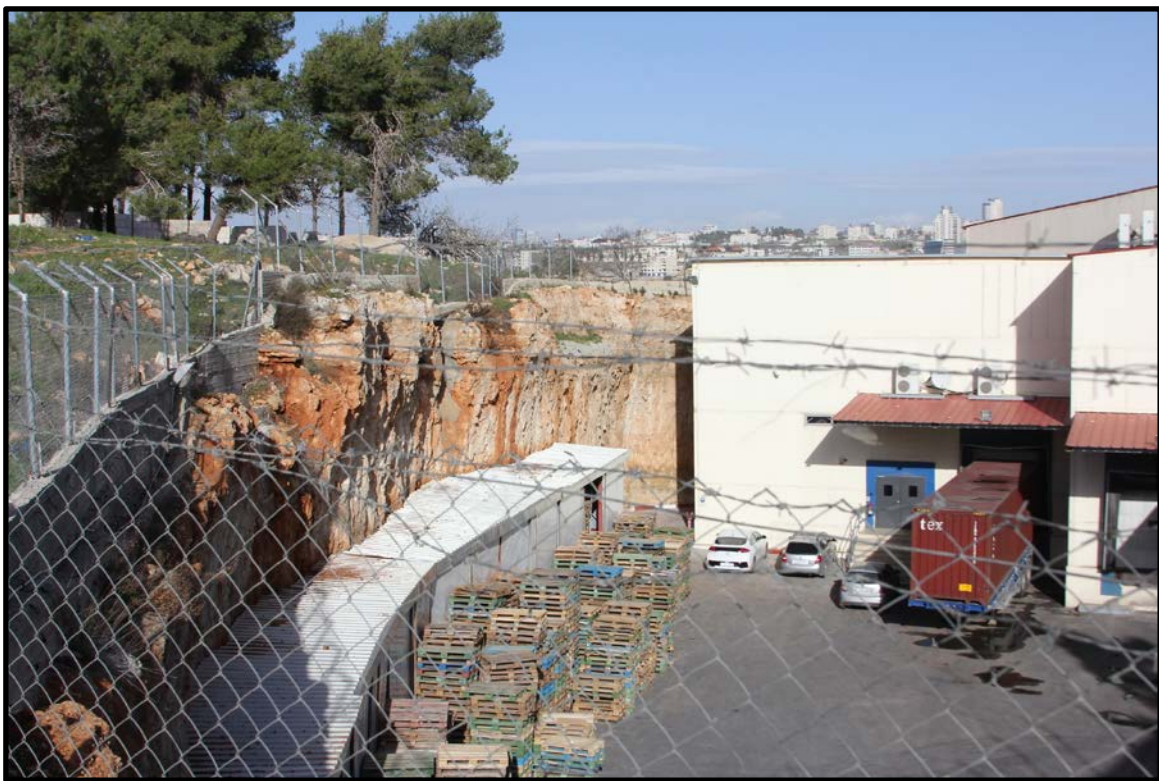


*Figure 28. Part of the Israeli separation fence between Areas "A" and "C," southwest Beitunia. An Israeli settlement can be seen on a hilltop in the distance, looking south. January 2018.*

Just off the survey map to the south, and beyond the old cemetery, another enormous structure is cut into the landscape. We located this apparent distribution center during our site visits, and hearing about it during one of our interviews prompted further research of its impact. As it turns out, this is Unipal's sole distribution center in Palestine, which receives imports of



consumer goods to the OPTs and repackages them for distribution to retail outlets.<sup>50</sup> They distribute Proctor and Gamble, Philip Morris Tobacco and Cigarettes, and Craft Food Products across Palestine.<sup>51</sup> Beyond physically representing the neoliberal economy, their business brought up a direct safety concern for the Old Town, as there was a strong presence of both children playing in the street, and the large freight trucks which had to pass through the same narrow streets (Interview #56).



*Figure 29. UNIPAL distribution center cut into the stone just south of the cemetery. January 2018.*

One particular interview (#10) generated a broader discussion about the significance of spaces within Beitunia from even before the Nakba. Specifically, the interviewee spoke of not only the older wells and olive presses which had been demolished since 1967, but of the

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<sup>50</sup> <http://www.apic.ps/en/article/18/Unipal-General-Trading-Company>

<sup>51</sup> "PALESTINE: UNIPAL, THE GENERAL TRADING COMPANY." IPR Strategic Business Information Database 4 Nov. 2002. Business Insights: Essentials.



northern winds which had previously been significant to the experience of Beitunia but have since been blocked by the urbanization of those lands as a result of the occupation and land tenure post-Oslo. Additionally, the interviewee discussed the lost spatial significance of the original entrance to town from the south, rather than the modern one from the north. This 180-degree reorientation of the experience of Beitunia was prompted by the occupation and subsequent closures of roads from the south. According to this interview, the occupying government likewise promoted the widening of roads within Beitunia, and paved a new arterial half a kilometer east of the old town, to create the access necessary for the aforementioned resource extraction.

This anecdote provided an example of the potential these mapping techniques can provide for eliciting spatial contextual information regarding social values. It also led us to discuss the exact location of demolished historic buildings within the Old Town both during the 1960s by Jordan, and the 1980s by Israel. I found that some of Riwaq's additional work in Beitunia confirmed the sites of these same buildings (Figure 5 in Chapter 1). In this way, urban renewal in Beitunia manifests as another aspect of the "post-"colonial occupation. However, there were also several sites identified during our interviews which symbolized resistance amid these processes, themselves a form of sumud today.

While the larger school (adjacent to the olive press) supplanted much of the old urban fabric on the east side of the olive press, these primary schools were key sites of significance among several of our interviewees. Regardless of where they were constructed, they've come to represent a hopeful future for Beitunia (Interviews #3, 4, 21, 37). For instance, Shatha spoke in our interview about how a portion of the redeveloped space in front of the olive press would have a new dedicated use as a garden for the school, as part of their educational programming.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with Shatha Safi, January 2, 2018.



*Figure 30. Al Fallujah Square (left) in a panorama with the large school (right), looking south. January 2018.*

Adjacent to this largest school, and the site consisting of the most individual markings from our mapping exercise, is Al-Fallujah Square (Figure 30). Just within the Old Town boundary, this was identified as the primary public and meeting place for Beitunians today. On the southern edge of this square is the smaller mosque, with a new minaret comprised of a metal radio tower and loudspeaker. This is also the square which elicited the new design of a roundabout celebrating some of the original families of Beitunia. The significance of the naming of this square refers to the influx of Iraqi refugees following the U.S. invasion in 2003. While none of the interviewees identified as one of these refugees, the name of this primary public space remains in solidarity with those in Fallujah, Iraq.

On the opposite end of town is the “Fruit Square,” which has come to represent the entrance from Ramallah to the newer part of Beitunia, north of the Old Town (Figure 31). As the primary spatial linkage between Beitunia and Ramallah, several interviews (#4, 25, 45, 53, and 56) referred to this roundabout as a central component of what they consider valuable to Beitunia. Referring to this significance of the agricultural landscape to Beitunia’s history and culture, the fruit square symbolizes part of this collective identity. Its connection to agriculture also symbolizes both Beitunian’s conception of *sumud* and its unique character in contrast to Ramallah. The demographics of those who value this site are also diverse in terms of age

range, gender, and relation to Beitunia, suggesting the potential for a regenerative project with value across these social categories.



*Figure 31. Fruit Square as seen from a sharoute bus. January 2018.*

Architecturally speaking, two unique examples of modern architecture fell just outside of the historic district, and were referred to as sites of cultural value (Interview #48). While these buildings could be considered both historic and significant based on the spatial survey and how they signify the broader architectural history of the region as informed by global trends, they've remained unrecognized by virtue of the continuation of Mandate Law regarding heritage. Regenerative work in Beitunia would also benefit from the inclusion of these building archetypes which can remain vacant but locally valued.



*Figure 32. One of the examples of overlooked modernism just outside of the Old Town designation. Building dated 1966. January 2018.*

## Summary

The fieldwork meant to evaluate what the social concerns and values were from the local perspective, in order to understand how to better assess which areas of importance deserve the most attention and care for future restoration and development. The interviews, along with walking the entire municipality to make field observations, did allow for us to uncover a wider variety of the social and economic issues facing Beitunia. Their analysis found some of the social disparities between how Beitunians viewed the Old Town, as well as the significance of agricultural livelihoods, which remain embodied by the historic architecture. The architecture remains highly threatened by both the occupation and real estate bubble, another byproduct of the occupation created by the rising land prices in Area “A.”

In spite of limitations from translations and the plan perspective, we discovered several historic spaces which have either been recognized but remain seemingly vacant, or which

remain unrecognized but are both occupied and valued. These spaces can represent the range of subaltern heritage discourses within Beitunia, beyond the dominant or “authorized” discourse exemplified by the historic Old Town boundary. Combined with the more passive field observations, this technique helped us uncover the range of how extrajudicial and illegal practices in the OPTs affect a living Palestinian community.

Despite the Israeli occupation, the thirty-four local residents who were born and raised in Beitunia had no apparent intention of moving elsewhere. The landscape, along with other sites of meaning both within the Old Town, and, in some cases, the newer part of Beitunia, remains a central source of pride for these residents. Along with the religious significance of both mosques, the nodes and edges we began with trying to map appeared instead to us as manifestations of this aforementioned concept of *sumud*. Usage of which dates back to even before the British Mandate, but it became a more prominent aspect of national identity after 1967. As a UNDP report explains, “separate and divided governance has led to economic, political, psychological and, ultimately, social fragmentation.”<sup>53</sup> The sociospatial dimensions of Beitunia kept orbiting this central theme of steadfastness in the face of occupation. Mapping is an inherently broad topic, and in my application of it within Beitunia, I came to face my own biases in using the technique over others by virtue of my experience with the specific software toolkit. *Sumud* can’t be simply mapped, as it is tied to an active and dynamic present, but it became clear how its embodiment can extend well beyond the historic fabric of an Old Town as originally assessed. Evaluating where and how this concept is embodied should be an explicit and ongoing part of regenerative efforts in the OPTs.

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<sup>53</sup> “*Sumud, Transformative Resilience, and the Changing Face of Aid in the State of Palestine.*” UNDP, 2016.

## Chapter 5 - Policy Recommendations and Conclusions

### *Proposals*

While the governance structure is the end goal of what needs reformation in the OPTs, there are ways in which the civil society organizations in Palestine can work towards an unoccupied future. John Giblin's explanation of heritage as a common element in post-conflict renewal<sup>54</sup> points toward an alternative future for Beitunia, wherein heritage values are negotiated and regenerated with residents. This would involve starting at the scale of the local, municipal governments, where there's already great potential for collective conversations and engagement which works toward this future.

#### *I. Management Plan*

What needs to be co-managed by the Municipality and NGOs working within Beitunia is three-fold:

1. The social values of the built environment's remaining late-Ottoman architecture as well as its juxtaposition with two aspirational, modern schools and two mosques.
2. The cultural values of the disrupted prior connections to the significant agricultural landscape, and its interpretation.
3. The economic values of self-sufficiency and traditional know-how of both utilizing the agricultural landscape and its related historic architecture.

### *General policies*

A broader consideration of built heritage should be included as part of the Municipality's 2018 Management Plan for Beitunia. It must recognize the overdue, recent shifts in heritage policy which seek to both understand and valorize relationships between local populations and

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<sup>54</sup> Giblin, John D. "Post-conflict heritage: symbolic healing and cultural renewal," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 20, no. 5 (2014): 500-518.



their built environment, rather than merely formal and material analyses. This system may still allow for comprehensive changes to building use within the area deemed 'Old Town' by the municipality, but moreover it must use a rights-based approach to promote socially sustainable development as part of the broader Municipal Plan. While Fida rightfully suggested the Master Plan as being regulatory by design,<sup>55</sup> it would benefit from the inclusion of a variety of methodological approaches to better meet its aims.

The general policies of this Municipal Plan would include a consideration of heritage in Beitunia as three-fold; with equally important social, cultural, and economic values. In turn, this would help avoid the pattern of growing dependence on foreign aid and IGOs, and work towards recovering local economic and cultural traditions as they relate to space, which have been undermined by the settler colonialism of Israel. The plan would accomplish this by leveraging the strengths of the socially valuable spaces which remain unrecognized by local designation. NGOs and IGOs should only assign value to or valorize places to which the residents demonstrably apply value.

#### *Governance framework*

In lieu of more transparent, reliable government actors in the OPT, the governance for Beitunia's Old City should remain pluralist, but ultimately in the hands of individual landowners and Palestinian NGOs who will work to build relationships between Beitunians and their cultural heritage across generations. Due to both the ineffective Oslo peace process and ensuing weakened state apparatus of the PNA, its Ministries (including Education, Social Development, and Tourism and Antiquities) alone cannot be relied upon to meet these local aspirations, let alone needs. A stronger local engagement with the civic sector instead of a functioning state, by using participatory and decentralized planning techniques, will more effectively act on these general policies. The participatory framework would be promoted through these local NGOs, but

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with Fida Abuzaid, January 14, 2018.

final say on design interventions would need to be negotiated through months-long design processes which could adequately assess the aspirations of multiple stakeholders.

### *Overarching objectives*

Along with utilizing heritage as a means to an end of reconciliation, establishing legitimacy and voice for Beitunians is central to an effective heritage management plan which improves the quality of life and fair access to the culturally significant land surrounding Beitunia. To that end, the plan must help mobilize the local population to find viable alternatives to the over-reliance on the UNESCO WHC, NGOs, and IGOs for political legitimacy and “humanitarian” aid which often only portrays the challenges Beitunia faces in the language of “crisis.” Additionally, focus must be retained on the necessary improvements to both access and interpretation of sites of cultural significance, and their relations to social, cultural, and economic values. Knowledge transmission across generations is crucial as a means for meeting these ends, and as such children should be included as part of the design process, whenever possible. Given the extenuating circumstances of the OPTs, an ‘arts-based’ approach, which supports resistance through both political and artistic means, would also be promoted by the management plan. For instance, this could help to promote the discoveries from the interviews, such as that of the historic entrance from the south. As justification for this approach, the International Academy of Art Palestine provides a precedent for the successful implementation of this type of engagement.<sup>56</sup>

### *Specific objectives*

The Municipal Plan for Beitunia would need to leverage the asset of its large schools to promote the transmission of historical and cultural knowledge. This could take the form of educational tours which students could learn and give to one another as part of the curriculum. In order to further promote education as a means to greater legitimacy and voice, creating more

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.artacademy.ps/new/about-us>.



easily discoverable and discernable registers of historic building and agricultural land owners would be important next steps. In addition, the plan should prioritize how to find ways to valorize architecture whose significance was revealed through engagement techniques, such as the mazar (or mashad) architecture near the old town's new entrance from the north, or the modern architecture found during fieldwork. If not as easily incorporated into the PNA framework via the management plan, NGOs such as Riwaq should also consider the potential for these modern forms of architecture which have yet to be valorized.

Closing of the historic street to through-traffic would be another priority of this plan. As our field research uncovered the much lighter use of the street within the center of the historic district relative to the wider street on the eastern edge leading to Al-Fallujah, this road should be closed off to all through traffic. Recreating a pedestrian emphasis along this historic corridor would help provide a platform for more community-based social activities in the heart of the Old Town. Similarly, the UNIPAL trucks and other freight would be required to travel only along the much wider arterial east of the municipality, for the sake of pedestrian safety and preservation of the architecture in the Old Town.

The plan would also promote mutual respect and consensus-building activities between local organizations and land owners which work towards discovering these additional, unforeseen places and stories of significance. Beyond methods of engagement such as the mental sketch mapping, this would involve making oral histories and design charrettes required components of community outreach by either the municipal government (on behalf of the PNA Ministries), NGOs, or IGOs, in order to better assess the shared values and aspirations between Beitunians. Based on the results of our mapping exercise, additional outreach should utilize historical photography of Beitunia and more three-dimensional representations of the landscape to facilitate discussions of values and significance. The plan would also understand the interconnected, geopolitical nature of the significance of the old town of Beitunia, and work

towards reforming the land tenure and access policies regarding the culturally significant Area “C” lands just outside of the old town. This would involve necessary outreach to Israeli political parties, namely Labour and Kadima, which could help negotiate for these reforms in the Israeli Knesset.

### *Operational framework*

Locally, the solution involves incentivizing the local NGOs to create rehabilitation teams within each municipality, as well as creating a cultural heritage protection-related department within the Ministry of Local Government to which these teams would report. Foreign donors, including the Aga Khan Development Network’s Agency for Microfinance<sup>57</sup> could help provide these incentives. After the precedent of these ongoing rehabilitations, the emphasis should be on use of these buildings for a public purpose, either through direct access, or at the least, the creation of additional uses such as a garden. NGO Management, in this sense, will help in promoting these as spaces of intercultural dialogue, including with the diaspora.<sup>58</sup> Shatha explained implementation of rehabilitation with at least 50% of the labor locally derived as the baseline goal,<sup>59</sup> but additional collaboration with the Palestinian Ministry of Labor could help this become official policy. In Birzeit, the Rozana Association for the Development of Architectural Heritage provides a basis for what has worked exceptionally well under these circumstances before, as they leveraged a network of other Palestinian organizations to implement a socially-responsible approach to development with local value-capture via skill development.

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<sup>57</sup> Aga Khan Development Network website: <http://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-agency-microfinance/aga-khan-agency-microfinance-what-we-do>.

<sup>58</sup> The Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center in Ramallah serves as an excellent precedent for the potential of these spaces.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Shatha Safi. January 14, 2018.

## *Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms*

The aforementioned cultural mapping techniques, in an attempt at mapping these cultural intangibilities, have gained recognition by international entities including UNESCO, but lack actionable monitoring for heritage sites. Processes for evaluating the outcomes of these management systems could be developed with the help of the Ministry of Labor, and other outside organizations such as Bimkom.<sup>60</sup> Locally, the municipality could also implement policies which promote monitoring in a bottom-up sense, through the creation of a local register of favorite buildings, spaces, or artwork within the municipality. For instance, this could include artwork on the side of the mosque near Fallujah Square, or paintings by students and teachers on a wall surrounding part of their school.

## *II. Commemorative Installation*

While our interviews created conversations about the heritage assets and concerns of residents in Beitunia from an outside perspective, a logical next step would involve the facilitation of these conversations *between* the residents. Organizing this interaction around a specific event, or specific spaces of which we've started to uncover the significance, could help overcome some reticence of the residents. Based on the fieldwork results which elucidated the stories of prior collective spaces, both near the Grand Mosque (#48) and within the Old Town (#10), these socially valuable sites should be included as the key points of congregation.

An installation within Beitunia, comprised of reconstructions based on the outlines of formerly significant buildings identified through interviews, could facilitate these communal connections and become primary sites of commemoration of a culturally significant past. This technique could also serve as a means of engagement with the diaspora. With an accompanying, twin installation, gaining a physical presence within a primary site of significance

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<sup>60</sup> <http://bimkom.org/eng/>.

for the diaspora would bring a community's attention toward the value of a shared history. The physical presence of an installation would also help signify the increasingly global implications of the importance of heritage conservation.

While the design should be another co-authored process, there would also need to be an important emphasis on its programming after installation. Ideally, the Municipality would be responsible for organizing a rotating calendar of events utilizing the space. These events could include weddings, markets, or entertainment-based activities. The municipality is already seeking out owners of partially-restored buildings for permission to restore the remainder of their buildings for similar public events,<sup>61</sup> therefore the creation of some of these spaces in the existing public domain of the streets would help further realize this goal. This would also work towards promoting a shared sense of collective identity, and connect these values with those of sumud as it relates to the remaining historic architecture.

### *III. Open Data*

As a result of the apparent discrepancy between datasets used in this research, and in an effort to help promote access to these sources, an open data initiative should be another priority for Beitunia. While implemented, actual use of the datasets remains a matter of the questionable nature of information pluralism, the differences in the data could instead be identified "as moments of conflict among assumptions and values to be resolved through social rather than algorithmic solutions."<sup>62</sup> Beyond this theoretical application, the incorporation of these datasets into a new, web-based map which allows for viewing and potentially downloading these sources would be an important first step. This could be achieved by first including Beitunia in the existing Grassroots Jerusalem mapping project:

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<sup>61</sup> Interview with Fida Abuzaid, January 14, 2018.

<sup>62</sup> Johnson, Jeffrey Alan. "From open data to information justice." *Ethics and Information Technology* 16, no. 4 (2014): 270.

<http://www.grassrootsalquds.net/>. Their work already includes the neighboring municipalities of Al Jib, Kafr Aqab, and Qalandia, and would benefit from an inclusion of Beitunia, as well. This would be a means of improving access to information about local organizations, keeping a register of evaluative work, and seeing what others have contributed as another online form of solidarity.

## *Conclusions*

The outcomes of this study show how with further research, the perspective on the Old Town should first be modified from only the plan perspective in order to improve the quality of participation. The process of spatially identifying and mapping these values begins to show some trends between different social connections to Beitunia, but they also definitively show the amount of spaces (40%) *outside* of the Old Town designation, which should be considered as part of the municipality's significance assessment. Working more towards this "plausible" object of heritage conservation is the future which the field needs to pursue. Further engagement with basemaps at different scales, and moreover with networks of NGOs partnering with municipal government, can begin to better inform the process of project identification or scoping.

While the age of extant architecture is a significant part of their local and outside appraisal, building clusters where there were also mixtures of residential and commercial uses, along with positions along primary thoroughfares between both old and new Beitunias, also appear to have great potential for the purposes of regenerative projects. In these cases, we can begin to see how the concept of sumud certainly includes but can also extend beyond the limits of an extant historic core of buildings. Diversity of demographics of those who value these sites also suggests the potential for successful regenerative projects, and should thereby become part of the valuation of cultural assets. These projects would also benefit from the inclusion of more modern building archetypes which can remain vacant but locally valued.

The unique potential for heritage planning as resistance within the OPTs is what initially sparked my interest in this topic of study. I found the experience to be one which allowed me to reflect on the implications of the position of an outside researcher, and how I've been allowed to see what's already there, while also finding a place for myself in the production of that understanding for others. Both of these aspects of the experience are ones of great privilege and responsibility. As with the work of any outside researcher, we must take positionality as a foundation for our approach. My personal interest in mapping directly shaped the process and outcomes of this study, but it is my hope that the aforementioned policy recommendations would be considered plausible by the Beitunia Municipality and Riwaq for ongoing restoration projects.

Clear obstacles of translation appeared immediately, but the end results point toward a broader understanding of heritage which could work towards empowerment and mobilization for a local population. Based on the results of this exercise, it became apparent how the object of significance was less the historic fabric, and more what it socially represented: sumud. This significance, and the symbolic power embedded within in it, cannot be underestimated. Likewise, the importance of both innovation and social impact in the fields of planning and preservation remains a central source of inspiration for this project, as a pilot which could hopefully be adapted in similarly conflicted contexts for spatializing values of where residents are proud to remain steadfast.



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# Appendix

## *Field Survey*

### Beitunia Mapping Exercise and Interview Questions

#### *Demographic questions:*

Age range: 18-24/25-34/35-44/45-54/55-64

Gender: F/M

What is your connection to Beitunia?

How long have you lived in Beitunia?

If you don't live there now, when did you? Why did you move?

#### *Mark all of these places on the aerial photo map:*

- What you consider home
- Where you work
- Where you spend time with friends
- Your place of worship
- Parts of the city that you frequent
- Parts of the city that you never go
- Your typical routes

#### *Based on these places you've marked:*

- Why are these areas you do or don't go?
- What are some of your favorite places in Beitunia?
- What places or buildings are you proud of?
- These areas that you frequent, do you consider them home?
- Where does this idea of home end for you?
- Are there things about these areas that you frequent that you don't like?
  - If so, what are they?

## *Municipality Interview*

**Fida:** old Betunia is composed of very small pieces of land 'natateef' which are smaller than 500m<sup>2</sup>, that cannot be classified as normal pieces of land. 2010 the 'taswiyeh' was done, it included breaking down the land ownership and dividing the parcels between the inhabitants of the old city.

**Salem:** what is the municipality's master plan for betunia?

**Fida:** 4700 donums (1 donum = 1000 sq. meter) of Betunia is under the current municipality. 26 000 donums is the total area of betunia including the lands confiscated by Israel. So only 20% of Betunia is under the control of Palestinians.

With RIWAQ, the municipality of Betunia is working on rehabilitation projects of old buildings and restoring them. This rehabilitation includes the restoring of building facades and squares, so that these squares will be used as public spaces for the town inhabitants. These public spaces might attract artist and other professionals to conduct exhibitions and other cultural events.

There are currently no building regulations in the old zone of Betunia. But whoever approaches the municipality with a project in that zone, the municipality will tailor the regulations specifically for each case to cater for the interest of the old town, and to sustain its character. Honestly there are cases in which new materials are inserted into the old town that affected negatively its character, so that's why we (the municipality) are working with RIWAQ to restore rehabilitate that zone.

The old buildings are concentrated specifically in the old town, but also present as autonomous buildings outside the limits of the old town. The municipality is working for identifying these spots and including them in the maps of the cultural and heritage conservation plan. This will eventually result in the regulations for building and the use of materials in the old town, by analyzing these buildings and studying its nature. These regulations are absent even from the Palestinian building law at the moment. In the rest of the West Bank, each project in an old neighborhood is decided upon its regulations specifically for each case, these regulations include the setbacks and the land use percentage and so on.

**Salem:** do you have at the moment a plan showing the historic buildings?

**Fida:** we only have a map that shows the limit of the old town. Like I have mentioned earlier, we are working to produce a map of the 'Historic Heritage' with Riwaq that includes the buildings of the old town and the autonomous buildings scattered outside the limits of the old town.

**Salem:** under what type of ownership do the parcels of the old town fall?

**Fida:** each parcel in the old town has a specific owner, where this land is not governmental but is owned individually by the inhabitants. The municipality or Riwaq can't do anything with the



land or the buildings without the permission of the owner. So for the current restoration projects, the municipality had to go through a legal process to ensure the owner's assent.

**Salem:** what kind of restoration are you doing at this stage?

**Fida:** the restoration is only in the façade. There are future plans to fully restore the buildings from inside but this depend on the funds.

**Salem:** who funds these projects?

**Fida:** there are donors who approach Riwaq, whom allow Riwaq to fund such projects

**Salem:** what is the nature of the relationship between the municipality and the ministry of tourism and antiquities?

**Fida:** any construction projects in Betunia should be supervised by the ministry, and the municipality should obtain the ministry's assent before working on any project. Even for individual projects in the old town, and individual should also obtain legally the assent of the ministry of tourism and antiquities. In most cases the ministry doesn't object the project, but they put restrictions and regulations for the construction, such as regulations on the height of the building, materials used, setbacks from neighbors and street, and limitations on excavations that might endanger the structural stability of neighboring historic buildings

**Salem:** do representatives from the ministry supervise the construction process?

**Fida:** in special cases they might send people to the site, but generally the ministry contact use (the municipality) and let us continue and supervise the work

**Salem:** how important is the issue of the preservation historic buildings to the municipality at the moment?

**Fida:** the preservation of historic sites in Betunia is a very important issue for the municipality, in which it occupies a major spot in the municipality's vision for the 2018 – 2022 strategic plan. This vision includes putting the construction regulations, restoration of historic sites, and working on Betunia to make it a touristic center that attracts people from all around.

**Salem:** during out interviews with people in Betunia, we were always receiving complains of how the historic buildings are closed off and can't be accessed and appreciated by the people in the area. Is the municipality willing to do projects that will open these site to the people?

**Fida:** it depends on the strategies and the results of the 2018 – 2022 plan, but it seems that it's an important issue and the municipality is currently thinking about such projects. For example, we (the municipality) are seeking the owners, of the buildings that are restored only from the outside and asking them for permission for full restoration to eventually be able to use such

spaces for economic and cultural events that benefit the society, in which people and inhabitants participate in these events and showcase their talents.

**Salem:** where are we standing in the 2018 – 2020 strategic plan?

**Fida:** we are still working on the vision, we are going to ask people and analyze the situation of the town and how the people will see their home land in the future. This is not something that the municipality alone can decide.